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ABSTRACT

The study examined policies and practices related to the reevaluation of 36 limited English proficient (LEP) and 36 non-LEP Hispanic students in elementary learning disability (LD) programs in two Texas urban school districts and how these policies and practices impact continued special education eligibility. The following specific objectives were researched: procedures used for assessment and placement of LD Hispanic students during the 3-year review; changes in test scores and language data which occurred during LD Hispanic students' first 3 years in special education; and current policies and practices influencing the 3-year reevaluation assessment and placement of LD Hispanic students. Among policy recommendations resulting from the study are the following: (1) assessment of language minority students referred to special education should include language assessment based on natural communication samples, and measures which tap cognitive academic language proficiency and pragmatic skills; (2) written justification should be required for English only assessments; (3) eligibility criteria specific to language minority students should be developed; (4) the LEP student should not be labeled learning disabled unless there is evidence that the handicapping condition exists in the primary language and not only in English; (5) appraisal personnel should be bilingual. Thirty-three tables are included along with a 36-item reference list. (DB)

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CHARACTERISTICS OF LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT AND ENGLISH PROFICIENT LEARNING DISABLED HISPANIC STUDENTS AT INITIAL ASSESSMENT AND AT REEVALUATION

Cheryl Y. Wilkinson

and

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This is Part I of a report of a research study examining the special education reevaluation (three-year review) process as it is carried out for limited English proficient and English proficient Hispanic students enrolled in programs for the learning disabled and speech language handicapped. (U.S. Department of Education, Contract No. 300-83-0272).

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Table of Contents

	Page
List of Tables	ii
Introduction	1
Objectives of the Present Study	1
Research Questions	2
Definitions	3
Review of Relevant Literature	5
General Issues in the Identification of Learning Disabled Language Minority Children	5
Issues in the Reevaluation of Learning Disabled Language Minority Children	10
Summary	12
Methods and Procedures	13
Results and Discussion	18
Initial Placement Characteristics	18
The Reevaluation Assessment	30
Changes in Test Scores and Language Data	46
Placement Procedures Following Reevaluation	54
Changes in Placement	55
District Policy Analyses	64
Implications for Policy, Practice, and Research	66
Assessment Policy	66
Eligibility Criteria	68
Admission, Review, and Dismissal Committees	69
Educational Programming	69
References	71

List of Tables

Table		Page
1.	Distribution of Limited English Proficient/Non-Limited English Proficient LD Matched Pairs by Grade at Referral	14
2.	Distribution of Limited English Proficient/Non-Limited English Proficient LD Matched Pairs by School Year of Referral	14
3.	Reasons for Referral of Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient LD Students	19
4.	Reasons for Referral as Grouped Under General Categories of Related Behaviors	21
5.	Reasons for Referral as Grouped Under General Categories for Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient LD Students	22
6.	Reasons for Referral Regrouped to Show the Possible Influence of Language-Related Factors	23
7.	Reasons for Referral Regrouped to Show the Possible Influence of Language-Related Factors for Limited Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient LD Students	24
8.	Primary Home Languages of Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient LD Students at Initial Placement	26
9.	Dominant Language at School for Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Students at Initial Placement	26
10.	Percentages of Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient LD Students Who Had Been Retained for the Full Sample and by District	27
11.	Birth Order of Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient LD Students	28
12.	Number of Siblings of Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient LD Students	29

Table | Page

13. Positions Represented on Initial ARD Committees for Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient LD Students 31

14. Tests Administered to Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Children at Initial Placement and Reevaluation (District 1) 33

15. Tests Administered to Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Children at Initial Placement and Reevaluation (District 2) 36

16. Number of Different Test Instruments Used in Initial and Reevaluation Assessments of Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Students 40

17. Mean Number of Nine Types of Tests Administered to Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient LD Students at Initial and Reevaluation Assessments by District 42

18. Mean Number of Nine Types of Tests Administered to Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient LD Students at Initial and Reevaluation Assessments Accross Both Districts 43

19. Language of Administration at Reevaluation for the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised (WISC-R) for Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Students 45

20. Language of Administration at Reevaluation for the Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery for Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Students 47

21. Mean WISC-R Scores for Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Students at Initial Assessment and Reevaluation 49

22. Mean Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery Scores for Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Students at Initial Assessment and Reevaluation 50

23. Mean Koppitz Error Scores on the Bender Visual Motor Gestalt Test for Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Students at Initial and Reevaluation Assessment 50

Table | Page

24. Language Dominance at School of Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Students at Reevaluation 52

25. Dominant Language at School for Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Students at Both Assessments 53

26. Mean Number of Persons Present at Initial and Reevaluation Admission, Review and Dismissal Committee Meetings for Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Students 54

27. Handicaps of Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Students at Initial Placement and at Reevaluation 56

28. Handicaps of Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Students at Initial Placement and at Reevaluation by District 58

29. Changes in Special Education Involvement at Reevaluation for Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient LD Students 59

30. Mean Amount of Time in Special Education Assigned at Initial Placement and at Reevaluation for Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Students (in minutes per week) 60

31. T-test Results for Comparisons of Time in Special Education in Minutes per Week for Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Students by Initial Handicapping Condition 61

32. T-test Results for Comparisons of Time in Special Education in Minutes per Week for Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Students by Reevaluation Handicapping Conditions 62

33. T-test Results for Initial Time in Special Education for Dismissed and Non-Dismissed Students 63

I

INTRODUCTION

In October, 1983, the Department of Special Education, College of Education, at The University of Texas at Austin, established a Handicapped Minority Research Institute on Language Proficiency (HMRI). The Institute is funded through a five-year contract with the United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. The purpose of the HMRI is to conduct research specific to exceptional limited English proficient (LEP) and bilingual students (Spanish/English). The focus of Institute research is on the interaction of students' language proficiency and handicapping condition(s), with conditions of interest including learning disabilities, mental retardation and communication disorders. These three handicapping conditions include 90% of Hispanic students in Texas who currently receive special education services, a trend consistent with national placement trends (Dew, 1984).

The HMRI research agenda includes longitudinal and cross-sectional studies designed both to describe current educational practice and to test hypotheses. The longitudinal studies focus on language assessment and intervention, while the shorter-term, cross-sectional studies focus on initial placement and three-year review characteristics of exceptional Hispanic children, prevalence of handicapping conditions among school-aged Hispanics in Texas, performance of bilingual learning disabled Hispanic students as a function of success attributions and learning strategies, effects of Spanish as the language of instruction in resource classrooms, LD eligibility of Hispanic students based on Spanish versus English assessment and cultural explanations for prereferral classroom behavior problems.

Objectives of the Present Study

This report is Part I of a larger research study which focuses on the reevaluation (three-year review) process as it is carried out for LEP Hispanic students in two school districts in Texas. Part I examines reevaluation procedures and outcomes for a sample of learning disabled (LD) students; Part II addresses these areas for speech and language disordered (SLH) students.

The objectives of Part I of this study were to: (a) examine procedures used for assessment and placement of LD Hispanic students during the three-year review; (b) explore changes in test scores and language data which occur during LD Hispanic students' first three years in special education; and (c) analyze current policies and practices influencing the three-year reevaluation assessment and placement of LD Hispanic students. Findings were used to generate recommendations for policy, practice and research germaine to the reevaluation of limited English proficent (LEP) and English proficient (non-LEP) LD students.

Research Questions

The central question posed in this study was: What are local policies and practices related to the reevaluation of LEP and non-LEP Hispanic students in LD programs and how do these impact continued special education eligibility? A series of related questions guided data collection and analysis:

Initial Placement Characteristics

1. What are the reasons for referral of LEP and non-LEP LD students?

2. What are the linguistic characteristics of both groups?

   a. What is the primary home language?
   b. What is the dominant language at school?

3. What are other initial placement characteristics of both groups?

   a. At what age are students referred?
   b. What are students' retention histories?
   c. How many siblings do students have and what is the birth order of subjects?

4. Which persons composed the initial placement committees for both groups?

The Reevaluation Assessment

1. How much time elapses between the initial assessment and the first reevaluation of LEP and non-LEP students?

2. What are the characteristics of test batteries used in the reevaluation process?

   a. Which tests are included in initial and reevaluation assessments?
   b. How many and what types of tests are included in initial and reevaluation assessments? Do the number and types of tests used differ for LEPs and non-LEPs?

3. What language testing is included in reevaluations?

4. In what language are tests administered at reevaluation? How does the language used at reevaluation compare to the language of administration for initial assessments?

Changes in Test Scores and Language Data

1. How do LEP and non-LEP students score on the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised (WISC-R) upon reevaluation? How do these scores compare to scores from initial assessments?

2. How do LEP and non-LEP students score on the Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery upon reevaluation? How do these scores compare to scores from initial assessments?

3. How do LEP and non-LEP students score on the Bender Visual Motor Gestalt Test upon reevaluation? How do these scores compare to scores from initial assessments?

4. What do teachers perceive to be LEP and non-LEP students' dominant language at the time of reevaluation? How does this compare to the dominant language at school at the time of initial placement?

Placement Procedures Following Reevaluation

1. How many persons compose reevaluation Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committees? How does the size of reevaluation ARD committees compare to the size of initial ARD committees?

2. What percentage of agreement occurs concerning reevaluation placements? How does the percentage of agreement compare at initial placement and at reevaluation for LEPs and non-LEPs?

Changes in Placement

1. What handicaps are assigned to LEP and non-LEP students following reevaluation? How do these handicaps compare to those assigned at initial placement?

2. How much time in special education is recommended for LEP and non-LEP students following reevaluation? How does this compare to the amount of time which was recommended at initial placement?

Policy

1. What steps and personnel are involved in reevaluations and the three-year review?

2. Are any provisions for consideration of children's linguistic and cultural backgrounds incorporated into district policies?

Definitions

Learning Disabilities

The definition of learning disabled students provided by the Texas Education Code (TEA, 1980) is:

> students (a) who demonstrate a signficant discrepancy between academic achievement and intellectual abilities in one or more of the areas of oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skills, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, mathematics reasoning, or spelling; (b) for whom it is determined that the discrepancy is not primarily the result of

visual handicap, hearing impairment, mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage; and (c) for whom the inherent disability exists to a degree such that they cannot be adequately served in the regular classes of the public schools without the provision of special services.

Limited English Proficiency

The Elementary and Secondary Education act of 1968 (amended by Public Law 98-511 in 1984) defines limited English proficient individuals as those "who (a) were not born in the United States or whose native language is other than English; or (b) come from environments where a language other than English is dominant ... and, by reason thereof, have difficulty speaking, reading, writing or understanding the English language."

Native Language

When used with reference to a student of limited English proficiency, native language is defined as "the language normally used with such individuals or, in the case of a child, the language normally used by the parents of the child" (P.L. 93-380, p. 566).

Reevaluation

Regulation 300.534 (20 U.S.C. 1412 (5) (c)) of the Education for all Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142) provides for periodic reevaluation of the status of students receiving special education services. The regulation states that "each state and local education agency shall insure ... that an evaluation of the child ... is conducted every three years or more frequently if conditions warrant or if the child's parent or teacher requests an evaluation" (Texas Education Agency, 1985, p. 93).

II

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

In order to be able to appropriately place and serve language minority children in special education programs, educators must separate the effects of a handicapping condition from the normal process of second language acquisition. While large research bases exist for both bilingual education and special education separately, the interface of these two areas has only recently begun to be considered. Documentation of patterns of disproportional representation of minority children in special education have led to the examination of potential problems with traditional special education procedures for this group. Areas considered include assessment bias, gaps between policy and practice in placing LEP students in special education, confusion over the definition of learning disabilities and factors other than the child's handicapping condition which may affect special education decisions.

While these potential problems have been examined mainly from the perspective of initial referral and identification, they are also relevant to the process of reevaluation. Additionally, issues specific to reevaluation can be identified. These include the stability over time of standardized test scores for language minority children, the comparability of initial and reevaluation assessment activities, and the effect of the new data provided by the reevaluation on a child's special education placement and program.

This literature review will briefly consider the general areas listed above. A comprehensive discussion of them can be found in a previous HMRI report (Ortiz et al., 1985). A more thorough review of issues specific to reevaluation will also be presented.

General Issues in the Identification of Learning Disabled Language Minority Children

Incidence of Exceptionality

Results of several incidence studies suggest that minority group children are not represented in special education in proportions equal to their representation in the general population. The Fall 1978 Elementary and Secondary Schools Civil Rights Survey (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1981) shows that while Black students constituted 16% of the national enrollment, they represented 21% of the special education population. Hispanics represented 7% of the national enrollment and 6% of the special education population. However, when survey data for Hispanics were examined by incidence of handicapping condition, 44% of Hispanic students in special education were found to have been placed in programs for the learning disabled. This percentage far exceeds expected incidence figures.

Ortiz and Yates (1983) used incidence figures derived from national studies to project expected numbers of exceptional Hispanics in Texas based on 1982 population proportions, then compared these expected figures to actual incidence as reported to the state education agency. Results showed that Hispanics were overrepresented in the LD category by 315 percent, but were underrepresented among the visually handicapped, hearing impaired, orthopedically handicapped, and mentally retarded.

Patterns of overrepresentation and underrepresentation documented to date cast serious doubts upon the ability of the current system of referral and assessment to accurately identify exceptional Hispanic children. Since the reevaluation process required by P.L. 94-142 is almost identical to the initial assessment process, the validity of both processes is called into question by the discrepancies between expected and actual incidences of exceptionality in Hispanic populations.

Assessment Bias

Some examinations of the placement of language minority students into special education have suggested that because of its inherent cultural bias, the assessment process may provide a partial explanation for the overrepresentation of language minority children in special education. Two opposing viewpoints exist concerning this issue.

Proponents of a psychometric viewpoint (e.g., Clarizio, 1982) argue that the validity of an assessment instrument should be derived from its ability to predict an external criterion. In the case of instruments used for special education assessment, the most appropriate criterion is believed to be school achievement. Since numerous studies exist which suggest that measures of intelligence such as the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised (WISC-R), Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) and Raven's Progressive Matrices Test predict school performance equally well for Hispanic and Anglo children, proponents of this viewpoint conclude that no bias exists.

Proponents of what Baca and Cervantes (1984) term a more "ecological" approach, however, place more emphasis on the interaction of the social environment and the individual. Mercer (1974), for example, argues that the values of the American Anglo middle class are inherent in both the public schools and the IQ tests which predict success in them. Therefore, simple predictive validity is not sufficient evidence of a lack of bias. Other proponents of the ecological viewpoint note that bias may be present in test construction procedures. For example, only 330 non-white children, of whom 305 were Black, were included among the 2,200 children on whom the WISC-R was standardized (Oakland & Matuzek, 1977).

Finally, some educators argue that concentration on technical bias in testing has masked a more basic, ethical issue involved in the development of social policy. Cole (1981), for example, notes that even a valid test may produce educationally or socially negative outcomes, and advocates the separation of the technical issue of assessment bias from the social issue of how schools should deal with their minority students.

Policy versus Practice in the Placement of LEP Students

Results of several studies suggest that although a number of safeguards exist in policy and recommended practices for the placement of minority students into special education, actual practice does not fully reflect these safeguards. Twomey, Gallegos, Anderson, Williamson and Williamson (1980) conducted a series of interviews with administrators and examined student placement records for a minority student sample in California. They reported that, although administrators were aware of Office of Civil Rights guidelines for special education placement, procedures documented in student records were not consistent with them. Assessments were conducted along traditional lines and focused on health and achievement factors, while little attention was given to native language testing, dialectal considerations, the influence of culture, the use of adaptive behavior scales or available multicultural assessment instruments.

In a similar study carried out in Colorado, Shepard and Smith (1981) examined procedures for referral, assessment and placement of children with perceptual-communicative disorders (PCD), a handicapping condition whose definition is similar to the federal definition of specific learning disabilities. Their results suggested that 59 to 74 percent of children identified as PCD did not meet the definition of PCD as given by law or the professional literature. Twelve percent of children in the sample were Hispanic or Native American and had a language other than English spoken in the home, but were classifed as PCD due to low achievement, differences between language and non-language achievement, and discrepancies between Verbal and Performance scores on the WISC-R. Shepard and Smith conclude that a number of minority children in their sample were not truly handicapped, but were so classified because they needed extra help which only the inaccurate classification of the child as PCD would bring.

Finally, Garcia (1984) conducted an exploratory study of referral, identification and placement practices used for Hispanic students in programs for the learning disabled in a large, urban school district in Texas. Examination of district records, reports, student eligibility folders, school records, the district's special education procedures manual and meetings with district personnel revealed that:

1. While special education policy manuals tended to reflect desired practice and contained procedural safeguards against misidentification and misplacement of students, there was a gap between policy and practice in referral, assessment, and placement of Hispanic students.

2. Information about language of testing and modifications of the testing process were so scant that no conclusions could be reached except to say that these issues do not appear to be given major consideration in assessment or eligibility decisions.

3. It was common practice to assess all students using a standard battery of tests, regardless of unique linguistic or cultural differences.

4. A fifteen point discrepancy between verbal and performance scales on the WISC-R was influential in determining eligibility for LD placement. LD Hispanic students were more likely to have a 15 point difference between verbal and performance scales than were non-referred control groups.

5. Admission, review and dismissal committees did not document what, if any, modifications of usual procedures were made to accommodate characteristics of language minority students.

6. There was a lack of interface between special education and other compensatory programs which was evidenced by a lack of participation by special program personnel in special education processes.

Overall, gaps between actual and desirable practice were evident in all three studies.

Definition of Learning Disabilities

An additional factor which complicates the identification of a learning disability in a language minority child is the vagueness of current definitions of LD (Cummins, 1984). Legal and professional definitions specify areas in which a disability may be manifested (for example, the definition contained in P.L. 94-142 mentions the areas of oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skills, reading comprehension, mathematics reasoning, mathematics calculation and spelling), but do not generally specify what evidence is needed to confirm the presence of a disability in any of the areas listed. Consequently, the incidence of learning disabilities varies widely from state to state, and may even vary among school districts in the same state. Kirk and Elkins (1975) further report a wide range of intellectual abilities in children classified as LD. Their study of approximately 3,000 LD students in 21 states revealed that 35% of them had IQs under 90.

Eligibility criteria may add further variance to the definition of learning disability as it is used in practice. For example, while Texas state regulations require that a discrepancy of at least one standard deviation between IQ and achievement be documented, the tests which may be used to gather evidence of this discrepancy can vary considerably. The WISC-R full scale IQ score may be compared to any or all scores from several different achievement batteries, including the Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery, the Peabody Individual Achievement Test, the Wide Range Achievement Test and several others. District testing practice may influence how many and which tests are administered to a child, and ultimately influence whether or not that child is eligible for LD services.

Factors Affecting Special Education Decisions

As has been mentioned above, the special education process as it is described in law and policy is intended to incorporate procedural safeguards which would stop the misclassification of minority and other

students. However, a number of research studies suggest that despite the existence of these protections, special education decisions may be influenced by factors other than the presence of a handicapping condition.

Algozzine, Christiansen and Ysseldyke (1982) suggest that a teacher referral itself is nearly enough to assure that a child will be found to be handicapped. A national survey of directors of special education conducted by these authors showed that from 3% to 6% of the school-aged population was referred to special education each year between 1977 and 1980. Of these, 92% were tested, and 73% of those tested were found to be handicapped and therefore eligible for special education. The authors conclude that the most important decision made in the special education process is the decision of a teacher to refer a child.

Further evidence of the importance of referral, as opposed to characteristics of children, in determining entrance into special education is provided by a study by Algozzine and Ysseldyke (1981). They asked 224 professionals from schools in Minnesota to read a case-folder description of a referred student and then participate in a diagnostic computer-simulation program. Data from the hypothetical case presented described performance in the normal range. Nonetheless, fifty-one percent of subjects found the students to be eligible for special education, with the most common handicap identified being learning disability.

Holland (1980) reports that once a referral has been made, a multiplicity of factors other than the multidisciplinary evaluation impact the final recommendations and decisions made concerning placement. Based on a field survey of 30 teachers, counselors, administrators and support service personnel in urban, suburban and rural sites near Philadelphia, Holland found that all of the following were considered in making final decisions: (a) parental pressures, (b) available programs or resources, (c) sex, (d) race/ethnicity, (e) vested interests of social agencies/advocacy groups, (f) the teacher's and/or principal's influence, (g) physical/social/emotional maturity of the student, (h) geographical proximity of special education services, and (i) academic abilities and school behaviors of the student. The author also noted that each person involved in the decision-making process interpreted the information presented using previous experiences, biases, and beliefs.

Overall, in summarizing five years of research on decision-making conducted at the Minnesota Institute of Research on Learning Disabilities, Ysseldyke, Thurlow, Graden, Wesson, Algozzine and Deno (1983) conclude that the special education decision-making process is inconsistent. They note that teachers tend to attribute problems to within-student causes, or to the student's home or family, and to refer students who "bother" them. In the case of language minority children, both linguistic and cultural barriers may separate teacher and student and result in a referral and eventual placement into special education.

Issues in the Reevaluation of Learning Disabled Language Minority Children

In considering the reevaluation process for a language minority child, it is important to note that all of the issues which pervade initial special education decisions are again present. Reassessment and review may result in continued overrepresentation of language minority children in special education, bias may still be present in assessment procedures, gaps between the safeguards of legal policy and actual practice may continue to exist, and factors other than the child's handicapping condition may exert an on-going influence on placement committee deliberations and decisions. Additionally, as a second assessment and decision-making process is undertaken, other issues, such as the stability over time of standardized tests and the effects of adding new data to initial information, also become important. The next section of this review will focus on these latter, reevaluation-oriented issues.

Stability of Test Scores Over Time

Very few studies have considered the stability of standardized test scores for handicapped and/or language minority children. Studies of long-term test stability tend to focus on stability of IQ as measured by the WISC-R. No studies of the stability of achievement test scores were found.

In general, WISC-R IQ scores appear to be stable over time for handicapped populations. Based on a sample of 75 LD and MR children tested two years apart, Vance, Blixt, Ellis and Debell (1981) report significant decreases for scores on the Similarities, Vocabulary, Digit Span and Block Design subtests and the Verbal IQ, and also report a signficant increase in scores on the Picture Arrangement subtest. However, they note that although several instances of statistically significant mean differences were found, test-retest correlations were high, and mean changes in Verbal, Performance and Full Scale IQs were only about 2 points. The authors conclude that their findings "provide evidence that the WISC-R is a reliable instrument over time when used with learning disabled and retarded youngsters" (p. 399).

Oakman and Wilson (1986) report similar results for a sample which consisted of 150 LD students from two Area Education Agencies in Iowa, who were tested 3 years apart. Full Scale and Performance IQs and scores on the Picture Arrangement subtest increased significantly. However, as in the previous study, actual score changes were small. Full Scale IQs changed by 4 points or less for 52% of the sample, while changes of 15 points or more were found for only 4%. The authors suggest that these changes may reflect a "modest" practice effect for the Performance subtests, and further suggest that given the stability of WISC-R scores, the cost of reevaluation IQ testing may not be justified.

Martin (1979) reports results which are slightly discrepant from those summarized above. Correlations between IQ testings were only moderate (.68 or less) for his sample of 35 LD students tested 4 years apart. However, most subjects in his study were initially tested with the WISC and retested with the WISC-R. Test stability may have been reduced by the use of tests which differed slightly in content and which were normed on different samples.

To date, no study has considered the stability of test scores when the child being evaluated is in the process of acquiring a second language. If testing is carried out in the weaker language, it seems likely that changes in scores which are much greater than those reported in the studies reviewed here might occur.

The Reevaluation Assessment

Several studies have focused on the reevaluation process as it is typically carried out. Overall, their results suggest that initial and reevaluation assessments are highly similar.

Elliott, Piersol and Galvin (1983) surveyed a sample of 40 school psychologists from urban and rural areas of Arizona, Colorado, Iowa and Nebraska about reevaluation practices. Psychologists were asked to list the tests and other procedures which they typically used in initial assessments and in reevaluations. Results showed that for initial evaluations, 92.5% of respondents used the WISC-R, 90% used the WRAT or the PIAT, 57.5% used the Bender-Gestalt, and 32.5% used the Draw-A-Person. Other initial assessment activities included classroom observations (62.5%), parent contact (60%), teacher contact (57.5%), record review (45%), staffings (35%), and student interviews (20%). Similarly, when conducting reevaluations, 95% of respondents used the WISC-R, 75% used the WRAT or the PIAT, 45% used the Bender-Gestalt, 27.5% used the Draw-A-Person, 52.5% observed in the classroom, 50% contacted parents, 45% contacted teachers, 45% reviewed previous student records, 35% held staffings, and 20% interviewed students. A survey of 112 psychologists conducted in Kansas (Kansas Association for School Psychologists, 1984) also reports that, in general, reevaluations tend to consist of repetition of the original test battery. While neither study specified the characteristics of children to be reevaluated, it seems likely that reevaluations for culturally and linguistically different children would not differ greatly from initial assessments.

While these data suggest that reevaluations are carried out in a somewhat pro forma fashion, other research suggests that this does not represent either desired or best practice. Lohry (1980) surveyed 79 Iowa school psychologists concerning their actual and ideal roles in three year reevaluations. She found a number of significant differences between real and ideal roles, and reported that psychologists surveyed would like to attend fewer meetings and do less IQ testing while doing more interpretation and integration of data and consultation with other school personnel. Hartshorne and Hoyt (1985) suggest that rather than consisting of simple retesting, reevaluations should consider three major areas: the continuing agreement between the child's characteristics and program eligibility criteria, the effectiveness of the child's program in

meeting the educational needs that were identified three years previously, and the identification of current needs. They note that readministration of a previous battery may only answer questions that were of interest three years before, and suggest that any reevaluation should begin with a process similar to referral in which questions of interest about the child are identified. It seems likely that such a procedure would increase the quality of reevaluations for all children, including those who are culturally and linguistically different.

Effects of New Data on Special Education Placement

Studies of the reevaluation process have also considered the effects of reevaluation data on children's educational programs. While no available study has looked specifically at placements of language minority children, those studies which have been carried out suggest that reevaluation infrequently results in a placement change.

Elliot et al. (1983) asked a sample of school psycholgists to estimate how often reevaluations resulted in a change in diagnosis or placement, and reported little change in either area. Fifty-five percent of the respondents stated that diagnosis changed in less than 3% of their cases, 22.5% estimated that diagnosis changed in 3 to 5% of their cases, and only 22.5% estimated that diagnoses were changed in more than 5% percent of reevaluations. Survey respondents further indicated that changes in placement following reevaluation occurred in 10% of cases at most.

Martin (1979) also reports that a majority of his 145 subjects received the same diagnosis and stayed in the same placement following reevaluation. Seventy-five percent of educable mentally retarded (EMR) students remained in an EMR class after reassessment; 67% of students classified as behavior disordered (BD) and 68% of students classified as LD also retained their diagnostic label and educational placement. Racial/ethnic backgrounds of the children within each handicapping condition were not specified.

Summary

Available research suggests that the accurate identification of learning disabled children who are culturally and linguistically different is a difficult process. Current assessment procedures and procedural safeguards do not always adequately insure that linguistic differences are distinguished from true learning problems.

The process of reevaluation as it is currently carried out does not appear to furnish data which would help to separate second language learners from handicapped students. Reevaluations typically consist of the same tests and other procedures which were used to identify the handicapping condition and infrequently result in a change in diagnosis or placement. However, studies conducted to date have not considered how limited English proficiency at the time of initial identification may affect reevaluation outcomes.

III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This was a descriptive, exploratory study of special education services provided to both limited English proficient and English proficient Hispanic students who were classified as learning disabled. The focus of the study was on students' first special education reevaluations and their subsequent educational placements. Students' eligibility folders were examined to determine when the first reevaluation occurred, how assessments were carried out, and what educational placement resulted from the reevaluation data. Differences in reevaluation procedures and outcomes for LEP and non-LEP students were of particular interest.

Data were collected on two occasions; once in 1984 and once in 1985. The 1984 data collection focused on subjects' entry into special education. Eligibility folders were examined in an effort to determine why students had been referred initially, how they were assessed, and to document the initial placement decision, including the identified primary and/or secondary handicapping condition(s). The 1984 sample, data collection and data analysis procedures have been described elsewhere (Ortiz et al., 1985). Methods and procedures described here apply to the 1985 data collection when reevaluation data were obtained.

Subjects

The sample for this study included 72 Hispanic students (54 males and 18 females) from two urban school districts in central Texas. Students were enrolled in grades 2 through 5 and received special education services due to a primary handicapping condition of learning disability during the 1982-83 school year. Thirty-six subjects (26 males and 10 females) had been classifed as LEP by their school district during 1982-83, while the other 36 (28 males and 8 females) had not. District special education and bilingual education records were used to verify each student's handicapping condition and LEP status.

Initial placement data from the earlier data collection were used to match LEP and non-LEP students so that both members of a LEP/non-LEP pair had been referred to and placed in special education: (a) while in the same grade, and (b) during the same school year. The majority of the 36 resulting pairs first entered special education while in the 1st grade and during the 1981-82 school year (See Tables 1 and 2). Initial data were also used to verify that students had been in special education for a minimum of three years and would therefore be eligible for reevaluation.

District Characteristics

To assure confidentiality, descriptive information about participating districts has been kept to a minimum. The two urban districts selected had a large Hispanic enrollment and long-established bilingual education and special education programs. The existence of

Table 1

Distribution of
Limited English Proficient/Non-Limited English Proficient LD
Matched Pairs by Grade at Referral

Grade	Matched Pairs n	%
Early Childhood Education	1	2.8
Kindergarten	1	2.8
1st	23	63.9
2nd	9	25.0
3rd	2	5.6
Total	36	100.0

Table 2

Distribution of
Limited English Proficient/Non-Limited English Proficient LD
Matched Pairs by School Year of Referral

School Year	Matched Pairs n	%
1979-80	4	11.1
1980-81	5	13.9
1981-82	27	75.0
Total	36	100.0

these programs was critical given the research focus on students who were both handicapped and limited English proficient.

District 1 had a total 1982-83 enrollment of 17,827 students, of whom 15,433 (86.6%) were Hispanic. The district had classified 1,337 students as learning disabled; 1,273 of these were Hispanic. District 3 had a total 1982-83 enrollment of 60,268 students, of whom 15,471 (25.7%) were Hispanic. The district had classified 4,164 students as learning disabled; 1,399 of these were Hispanic.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection procedures involved three steps: (a) design of data collection forms, (b) training of data coders, and (c) the data collection activity itself.

Design of Data Collection Instruments. A data collection form was designed to capture reevaluation information from student records. Copies of the various special education forms used by the districts were obtained and information specific to the reassessment and subsequent educational placement of students was identified. Due to differences between forms used by the two school districts, two separate data collection instruments were designed to expedite data collection. However, both forms collected similar reevaluation information.

Training of Coders. Nine individuals participated in data collection, including two part-time research assistants hired specifically for this task, five University of Texas at Austin faculty and staff members, and two master's students in the Bilingual Special Education Training Program. The coders received training which familiarized them with district special education forms and the data collection instruments, and were supervised by HMRI trainers who examined the accuracy of data collection for the first three data collection forms completed. Corrective feedback was provided as needed. In addition, coders checked each other's work as data collection forms were completed.

Data Collection. Reevaluation data were collected between February and July of 1985. Each district's special education director was designated by the superintendent or an assistant superintendent to be an official liaison to the HMRI. The district liaison notified other district personnel, including central office staff responsible for maintenance of special education records, that approval had been granted to examine student folders.

Data Preparation and Analysis

Verified and corrected reevaluation data were arranged into two separate computer files, one for each district, as an initial step toward the preparation of a "master" data file containing initial and reevaluation data for all students from both districts. For each district file, a corresponding control card file was written using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS; Nie et al., 1975).

After the district data and control card files were completed and debugged, HMRI staff reviewed variable lists from each district and from the 1984 data collection (Ortiz et al., 1985) to identify information which had been entered into student records at both initial placement and at reevaluation and which was available for both districts. Initial and reevaluation district files were combined to create a "master" LD file which was used for data analyses.

Analyses included both descriptive information such as frequencies, means and crosstabulations, and inferential statistics such as analysis of variance. Further details about individual data analyses are provided in the results section.

Methodology Limitations

Because of the need to locate students who were enrolled in special education programs in the same school district at two different times, separated by a three year interval, only a relatively small sample could be obtained for this study. Testing of some inferential hypotheses was therefore limited by sample size, and results based on this sample are probably not generalizable to students who change school districts between special education evaluations.

The results of this study are also limited because the special education interventions which occurred between evaluations were not documented. Some reevaluation data, most probably reevaluation achievement test scores, were undoubtedly influenced by the quality of these interventions as well as by child characteristics such as severity of the handicapping condition. Records of the type and duration of interventions undertaken were not, however, a part of children's eligiblity folders.

Additionally, the results reported in this document are based on an exploratory, field-oriented, and ex post facto research methodology. Therefore, the limitations of descriptive methodology are also limitations of this investigation. Kerlinger, and Mason and Bramble (cited in Garcia, 1984), describe these limitations:

1. The range and number of complex variables which are often studied in non-laboratory settings can result in substantial problems in the identification of cause-and-effect relationships among the variables.

2. Because appropriate sampling may be problematic, there are difficulties, hazards and limitations associated with the generalization of results. Moreover, in a study utilizing an ex post facto methodology, the research subjects have already been assigned to the program being investigated.

3. Descriptive research also has the additional limitation that the reported findings may be biased in the collection and interpretation of the data. Because this type of research methodology relies on a type of open-ended nature of inquiry, there is sometimes a tendency to overlook evidence that could cause one to arrive at different interpretations or conclusions.

One final limitation of the present investigation concerns the interpretation of the findings. In research that deals with the collection of information from student folders, the results can be only as reliable and as valid as the information documented in school district special education records. As Kerlinger (cited in Garcia, 1984) warns:

> The records of many schools and school districts are not well kept. And in most cases no thought has been given to the research use of records. Scores will be missing or inaccurately recorded .... Meanwhile, investigators must be constantly alert to possibilities of inaccuracies and the fact that school records are often not in adequate form for statistical treatment. (pp. 543-544)

Missing data may be regarded as indicating the absence of some pertinent special education action. However, drawing such a conclusion may be erroneous, as the action may have occurred but simply not have been recorded.

IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Examination of the reevaluations of LEP and non-LEP LD Hispanic students focused on six major areas: (a) students' initial placement characteristics, (b) the reevaluation assessment, (c) changes in test scores and language data at reevaluation, (d) placement procedures following reevaluation, (e) changes in placement at reevaluation, and (f) district policies. Federal and state policies related to reevaluation were also examined.

Initial Placement Characteristics

The following research questions concerning initial placement characteristics were examined:

1. What are the reasons for referral of LEP and non-LEP LD students?

2. What are the linguistic characteristics of both groups?
   a. What is the primary home language?
   b. What is the dominant language at school?

3. What are other initial placement characteristics of both groups?
   a. At what age are students referred?
   b. What are students' retention histories?
   c. How many siblings do students have and what is the birth order of subjects?

4. Which persons composed the initial placement committees for both groups?

Reasons for Referral

Teachers listed a total of 23 reasons for the referral of LEP students and 22 reasons for the referral of non-LEP students. The five most frequently cited reasons for referral of LEP students (see Table 3) were:

1. Poor academic progress (37.5%)

2. Poor progress in reading (37.5%)

3. Poor progress in math (21.9%)

4. Poor memory or retention (21.9%)

5. Needs extra/individualized help (15.6%)

Table 3

Reasons for Referral of
Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient LD Students

Reason	LEP (n=32) #	LEP (n=32) %	Non-LEP (n=32) #	Non-LEP (n=32) %
Poor academic progress	12	(37.5)	15	(46.9)
Poor progress in reading	12	(37.5)	9	(28.1)
Poor progress in math	7	(21.9)	7	(21.9)
Poor memory or retention	7	(21.9)	4	(12.9)
Needs extra/individualized help	5	(15.6)	2	(6.3)
High distractibility; poor attention	4	(12.5)	7	(21.9)
Poor progress in spelling	4	(12.5)	4	(12.5)
Poor progess in language arts	4	(12.5)	2	(6.3)
Poor language development	3	(9.4)	4	(12.5)
Poor progress in writing	3	(9.4)	3	(9.4)
Behavior problems	3	(9.4)	2	(6.3)
Speech	3	(9.4)	2	(6.3)
Cannot follow directions	3	(9.4)	1	(3.1)
Has trouble comprehending	2	(6.3)	1	(3.1)
General immaturity	2	(6.3)	1	(3.1)
Visual problems	2	(6.3)	1	(3.1)
Motivation problems	2	(6.3)	1	(3.1)
Problems with motor skills	1	(3.1)	5	(15.6)
Miscellaneous	1	(3.1)	2	(6.3)
Hyperactive	1	(3.1)	1	(3.1)
Poor progress in other academic areas	1	(3.1)	1	(3.1)
Articulation problems	1	(3.1)	0	(0.0)
Request of parent	1	(3.1)	0	(0.0)
Poor auditory discrimination	0	(0.0)	2	(6.3)

Note. Percentages equal the percentage of subjects for whom a referral reason was listed. Subjects may have had more than one reason for referral. Therefore, percentages will not sum to 100.

The five most frequently cited reasons for referral of non-LEP students were:

1. Poor academic progress (46.9%)

2. Poor progress in reading (28.1%)

3. Poor progress in math (21.9%)

4. High distractibility; poor attention (21.9%)

5. Problems with motor skills (15.6%).

Percentages listed for referral reasons will sum to more than 100 since most students had more than one reason for referral. The average number of reasons given for referral of LEP students was 2.6; the average for non-LEP students was 2.5.

Due to low frequencies and percentages, related behaviors were grouped under broader categorical headings of reasons for referral (see Table 4). Two reasons, poor academic progress in general and poor progress in reading, were maintained as independent categories because they were frequently cited. After data were retabulated using these new categories (see Table 5), the most common reason for referral of LEP students was attention/behavior problems. This category was listed for 65.6% of LEP students. The most common reasons for referral of non-LEP students were attention/behavior problems and poor academic progress in general. Reasons from within each of these categories were listed for 46.9% of non-LEPs.

The large number of referral reasons which fell into the attention/behavior problem category, especially for LEP students, raised the question of whether reason for referral could be related to a lack of English proficiency. Research literature on second language acquisition documents characteristics of second language learners which may be similar to behaviors considered to be indicative of speech/language disorders or learning disabilities (Ortiz and Maldonado-Colon, 1986). These may include behaviors such as failure to establish eye contact, difficulty following directions, inattention or poor retention (Celce-Murcia, 1978). It was hypothesized that special education referral may result from teachers' lack of understanding of some phases of the second language acquisition process.

Reasons for referral which the literature suggests may be related to second language acquisition were regrouped into the language problems category (see Table 6). After data were retabulated using these new language-related categories (see Table 7), the most common reason for referral of LEPs was language problems. This category was listed for 53.1% of LEP students. The most common reason for referral of non-LEP students was poor academic progress (listed for 46.9% of students). Overall, data suggest that behaviors which may be a part of the second language process play an important role in the referral of LEP students, and that teachers do not report similar problem behaviors for non-LEP students.

Table 4

Reasons for Referral as Grouped Under
General Categories of Related Behaviors

1.	Poor Academic Progress
2.	Poor Progress in Reading
3.	Poor Progress in Academic Areas (except reading): Math Spelling Language Arts Writing Other
4.	Attention/Behavior Problems: Poor memory, retention General immaturity Needs extra/individualized help Has trouble comprehending Hyperactive Highly distractible, poor attention Behavior problems Cannot follow directions Motivation problems
5.	Language Problems: Poor language development/limited language Problems in both languages Speech Articulation
6.	Visual, Motor, Auditory Problems: Poor auditory comprehension, suspected hearing problems Problems in motor skills Visual problems
7.	By Request of Other: Parent
8.	Miscellaneous: None of the above

Table 5

Reasons for Referral
as Grouped Under General Categories of Related Behaviors for
Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient LD Students

Category	LEP (n=32) #	LEP (n=32) %	Non-LEP (n=32) #	Non-LEP (n=32) %
1. Attention/behavior problems	21	(65.6)	15	(46.9)
2. Poor academic progress	12	(37.5)	15	(46.9)
3. Poor progress in reading	12	(37.5)	9	(28.1)
4. Poor progress in other academic areas	10	(31.3)	10	(31.3)
5. Language Problems	8	(25.0)	6	(18.8)
6. Visual, Motor, Auditory Problems	3	(9.4)	6	(18.8)
7. By Request of Other	1	(3.1)	0	(0.0)
8. Miscellaneous	1	(3.1)	2	(6.3)

Note. Percentages equal the percentage of subjects for whom a referral reason in this category was listed. Subjects may have had more than one reason for referral. Therefore, percentages will not sum to 100.

Table 6

Reasons for Referral Regrouped to Show the
Possible Influence of Language-Related Factors

1. Poor Academic Progress

2. Poor Progress in Reading

3. Poor Progress in Academic Areas (except reading):
   - Math
   - Language Arts
   - Spelling
   - Writing
   - Other

4. Attention/Behavior Problems:
   - General immaturity
   - Needs extra/individualized help
   - Hyperactive
   - Highly distractible, poor attention
   - Behavior Problems

5. Language Problems:
   - [a]Poor memory, retention
   - [a]Has trouble comprehending
   - [a]Cannot follow directions
   - [a]Motivation problems
   - [a]Poor auditory comprehension, suspected hearing problem
   - Poor language development/limited language
   - Problems in both languages
   - Speech
   - Articulation (specific problem)

6. Visual, Motor, Auditory Problems:
   - Problems in motor skills
   - Visual problems

7. By Request of Other:
   - Parent

8. Miscellaneous
   - None of the above

[a]Regrouped Reasons

Table 7

Reasons for Referral Regrouped to Show
Possible Influence of Language-Related Factors for
Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient LD Students

	LEP (n=32)		Non-LEP (n=32)	
	#	%	#	%
1. Language Problems	17	(53.1)	14	(43.8)
2. Attention/Behavior Problems	13	(40.6)	10	(31.3)
3. Poor Academic Progress	12	(37.5)	15	(46.9)
4. Poor Progress in Reading	12	(37.5)	9	(28.1)
5. Poor Progress in Other Academic Area	10	(31.3)	10	(31.3)
6. Visual, Motor, Auditory Problems	3	(9.4)	5	(15.6)
7. By Request of Other	1	(3.1)	0	(0.0)
8. Miscellaneous	1	(3.1)	2	(6.3)

Note. Percentages equal the percentage of subjects for whom a referral reason in this category was listed. Subjects may have had more than one reason for referral. Therefore, percentages will not sum to 100.

Linguistic Characteristics

Primary Home Language. Students' primary home language(s) was determined from sociological records (see Table 8). LEPs were more likely than non-LEPs to have Spanish as their only home language.

Dominant Language at School. Students' dominant language at school was determined by teacher judgment (see Table 9). Data concerning dominant school language were available for 61 subjects (85% of the full sample, representing 92% of LEPs and 78% of non-LEPs). The majority of LEPs (58.3%) were perceived to be Spanish dominant in school, while the majority of non-LEPs (55.6%) were perceived to be English dominant.

Overall, data concerning linguistic characteristics suggest that LD LEPs and non-LEPs did, in fact, differ in terms of their exposure to, and use of, English at the time of their placement in special education.

Other Characteristics

Age at Referral. Age at referral was obtained by subtracting the child's birthdate from the date given on the referral form. The mean age at referral for LEP students (n = 31) was 2705.9 days. This is approximately equal to 7, years 5 months. The mean age at referral for non-LEP students (n = 34) was 2690.1 days. This is also about equal to 7 years 5 months. Age at referral did not differ for LEP and non-LEP students.

Retention History. Retention information was obtained from referral forms and other school history information. Data concerning retention were missing for 13.9% of LEPs, 5.6% of non-LEPs and 9.7% of the sample overall. Data for the full sample (see Table 10) show that the majority of LEPs for whom information was available (18 out of 31, or 58.1%) were not retained, while the majority of non-LEPs for whom data were available (20 out of 34, or 58.8%) had been retained. Data from each district suggest that district practice strongly affects retention patterns. The majority of students from District 1 were not retained, while the majority of students from District 2 were. These district patterns occurred for both LEP and non-LEP students. The results for the general sample may, therefore, have been influenced by the fact that missing data were not equally distributed across districts and LEP status.

Birth Order and Number of Siblings. The birth order and number of siblings for LEP and non-LEP LD students were obtained from sociological information. The largest group of students from each group (30.3% of LEPs and 34.4% of non-LEPs) were first-born children (see Table 11). The number of siblings for LEPs averaged 4.3, and ranged from 1 to 12 (see Table 12). The number of siblings for non-LEPs averaged 3.9, and ranged from none to 11. Overall, LEPs and non-LEPs appeared to be similar in regard to birth order and number of siblings.

Table 8

Primary Home Languages of
Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient LD Students
at Initial Placement

	LEP (n=36)		Non-LEP (n=36)	
Language	#	%	#	%
English	7	(19.4)	15	(41.7)
Spanish	28	(77.8)	15	(41.7)
Both	1	(2.8)	3	(8.3)
No Information	0	(0.0)	3	(8.3)
Total	36	(100.0)	36	(100.0)

Table 9

Dominant Language at School for
Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Students
at Initial Placement

	LEP (n=36)		Non-LEP (n=36)	
Language	#	%	#	%
English	7	(19.4)	20	(55.6)
Spanish	21	(58.3)	5	(13.9)
Both	5	(13.9)	3	(8.3)
No Information	3	(8.3)	8	(22.2)
Total	36	(100.0)	36	(100.0)

Table 10

Percentages of
Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient LD Students
Who Had Been Retained for the Full Sample and by District

Total Sample

	LEP (n=36)		Non-LEP (n=36)		Total (n=72)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Retained	13	(36.1)	20	(55.5)	33	(45.8)
Not Retained	18	(50.0)	14	(38.9)	32	(44.4)
No Information	5	(13.9)	2	(5.6)	7	(9.7)
Total	36	(100.0)	36	(100.0)	72	(100.0)

District 1

	LEP (n=20)		Non-LEP (n=20)		Total (n=40)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Retained	2	(10.0)	6	(30.0)	8	(20.0)
Not Retained	16	(80.0)	12	(60.0)	28	(70.0)
No Information	2	(10.0)	2	(10.0)	4	(10.0)
Total	20	(100.0)	20	(100.0)	40	(100.0)

District 2

	LEP (n=16)		Non-LEP (n=16)		Total (n=32)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Retained	11	(68.8)	14	(87.5)	25	(78.1)
Not Retained	2	(12.5)	2	(12.5)	4	(12.5)
No Information	3	(18.8)	0	(0.0)	3	(9.4)
Total	16	(100.0)	16	(100.0)	32	(100.0)

Table 11

Birth Order of
Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient LD Students

Birth Order	LEP (n=33) #	LEP (n=33) %	Non-LEP (n=32) #	Non-LEP (n=32) %
1	10	(30.3)	11	(34.4)
2	4	(12.1)	9	(28.1)
3	6	(18.2)	1	(3.1)
4	3	(9.1)	2	(6.3)
5	2	(6.1)	4	(12.5)
6	5	(15.2)	2	(6.3)
7	1	(3.0)	0	(0.0)
8	1	(3.0)	0	(0.0)
9	1	(3.0)	2	(6.3)
10	0	(0.0)	1	(3.1)
Total	33	(100.0)	32	(100.0)

Table 12

Number of Siblings of
Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient LD Students

	LEP (n=35)		Non-LEP (n=34)	
Number of Siblings	#	%	#	%
0	0	(0.0)	1	(2.9)
1	4	(11.4)	5	(14.7)
2	7	(20.0)	6	(17.6)
3	6	(17.1)	8	(23.5)
4	6	(17.1)	3	(8.8)
5	0	(0.0)	3	(8.8)
6	5	(14.3)	4	(11.8)
7	4	(11.4)	1	(2.9)
8	1	(2.9)	0	(0.0)
9	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
10	0	(0.0)	1	(2.9)
11	1	(2.9)	2	(5.9)
12	1	(2.9)	0	(0.0)
Total	35	(100.0)	34	(100.0)
$\bar{x}$	4.3		3.9	

Initial ARD Committee Membership

The average size of the initial Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee for LEPs was 6.1 persons. Committee sizes ranged from 4 to 10 persons. The average size of initial ARD committees for non-LEPs was 6.2 persons, with committee sizes ranging from 4 to 9.

A total of 16 positions (including two "other" categories) were represented on committees considering placement for LEP students; 15 positions were represented on committees for non-LEPs (see Table 13). ESL teachers were present in 2 cases (5.6%) for LEP students, but were not represented on any placement committees for non-LEP students. The two positions which were most likely to be represented for both LEPs and non-LEPs were administrator (present on all committees) and appraisal representative (97% of committees for both LEPs and non-LEPs). Only two positions, speech/language teacher and counselor, showed more than a 10% difference in representation for LEPs and non-LEPs. Speech/language teachers were present at 27.8% of initial ARDs for LEPs but only 13.9% of initial ARDs for non-LEPs; counselors were present at 22.2% of initial ARDs for non-LEPs but only 11.1% of initial ARDs for LEPs. In general, both the size and composition of initial placement committtees were similar for LEPs and non-LEPs.

The Reevaluation Assessment

The following research questions were used to guide analysis of data pertaining to the reevaluation assessment:

1. How much time elapses between the initial assessment and the first reevaluation of LEP and non-LEP students?

2. What are the characteristics of test batteries used in the reevaluation process?
   a. Which tests are included in initial and reevaluation assessments?
   b. How many and what types of tests are included in initial and reevaluation assessments? Do the number and type of tests used differ for LEPs and non-LEPs?

3. What language testing is included in reevaluations?

4. In what language are tests administered at reevaluation? How does the language used compare to the language of administration for initial assessments?

Time Between Evaluations

The time between initial assessment and reevaluation was calculated by determining the number of days between the dates of each assessment. The average number of days between evaluations for LEPs was equal to 1089.2 or 2 years, 359.2 days. The average number of days between assessments for non-LEPs was 1100.4, or, 3 years, 5.4 days. Both means approximate the three year interval for reevaluation set in federal and

Table 13

Positions Represented on Initial ARD Committees for Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient LD Students

Position	LEP (n=36) #	LEP (n=36) %	Non-LEP (n=36) #	Non-LEP (n=36) %
Administrator	36	(100.0)	36	(100.0)
Appraisal representative	35	(97.2)	35	(97.2)
Family representative[a]	28	(77.8)	30	(83.3)
Mother	28	(77.8)	27	(75.0)
Father	1	(2.8)	5	(13.9)
Regular education teacher	24	(66.7)	26	(72.2)
Special education teacher	24	(66.7)	23	(63.9)
Educational liaison	16	(44.4)	13	(36.1)
Special education supervisor	15	(41.7)	16	(44.4)
Instructor	11	(30.6)	11	(30.6)
Speech/language teacher	10	(27.8)	5	(13.9)
Speech therapist	6	(16.7)	7	(19.4)
Visiting teacher	6	(16.7)	9	(25.0)
Counselor	4	(11.1)	8	(22.2)
Other-A[b]	4	(11.1)	4	(11.1)
Other-B[b]	4	(11.1)	4	(11.1)
Nurse	2	(5.6)	1	(2.8)
ESL teacher	2	(5.6)	0	(0.0)

[a]The total shown for family representation is not equal to the sum of mothers plus fathers since both parents may have attended.

[b]The other category includes positions not represented on this list or persons for whom a position could not be determined. The first person falling into this category was counted as Other-A, the second was counted as Other-B

state policy. The difference between the two means is not significant ($t = -0.22$ with 66 d.f.; $p = .82$) indicating that LEPs and non-LEPs were reevaluated after approximately the same amount of time.

While ARD committees can choose to request a reevaluation before 3 years, this occured infrequently. Only 1 LEP (representing 2.9% of LEPs) and 2 non-LEPs (representing 6.0% of non-LEPs) were reevaluated within 2 years and 6 months of their initial assessment. Of these children, one (a non-LEP) was dismissed from special education, while the other two were found to have the same handicapping conditions as at initial placement. These results suggest that when LEP or non-LEP children are placed in special education, they are likely to remain in that placement for at least three school years.

Reevaluation Test Batteries

Tests Administered. The names of standardized tests used by each district as a part of initial and reevaluation test batteries were obtained from assessment reports. These tests were divided into nine categories using available information from test publishers or other sources regarding their purpose. These categories included IQ, achievement, adaptive behavior, language proficiency, other speech and language (e.g., tests of articulation, receptive vocabulary or expressive skill), projective, perceptual/motor, developmental or readiness, and other tests. Tables 14 and 15 give the categorizations of all tests. Across both districts, the most commonly used tests included the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised, the Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery, and the Bender Visual Motor Gestalt Test. These tests were given to at least 50% of both LEPs and non-LEPs during both initial and reevaluation assessments. At least 50% of students in District 1 were also administered the Wide Range Achievement Test, the Durrell Analysis of Reading Difficulty, and the Language Assessment Scales as part of both evaluations; at least 50% of students in District 2 were given the Human Figure Drawing Test both times.

The districts differed in the number of different instruments used across the initial and reevaluation assessments (see Table 16). In District 1, a total of 20 instruments were represented in initial assessment batteries, while a slightly increased number (24) was represented in reevaluation assessments. In District 2, a wider range of instruments was contained in initial assessments (33 different tests versus 27 for reevaluation assessments). The patterns described for district test usage also held for LEPs and non-LEPs within each district.

Comparison of the number of different tests within the nine categories described above showed that, for District 1, reevaluations were characterized by the use of fewer IQ tests than had been used at initial evaluation and by the use of a greater number of projective instruments. In District 2, reevaluations contained a smaller number of language proficiency, perceptual motor and readiness test instruments, but more test instruments classified as "other." The number of different instruments represented in assessments of LEPs and non-LEPs was aproximately equal, except for achievement tests in District 2. A wider variety of test instruments was used for non-LEPs than for LEPs in this category.

Table 14

Tests Administered to
Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Children at
Initial Placement and Reevaluation
(District 1)

	LEP				Non-LEP			
	Initial Placement (n = 20)		Reevaluation (n = 20)		Initial Placement (n = 20)		Reevaluation (n = 20)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Intelligence Tests								
Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised	16	(80.0)	20	(100.0)	18	(95.0)	19	(90.0)
Slosson Intelligence Test	8	(40.0)	1	(5.0)	5	(25.0)	0	(0.0)
Leiter International Performance Scale	5	(25.0)	0	(0.0)	2	(10.0)	1	(5.0)
Columbia Mental Maturity Scale	1	(5.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
McCarthy Scales of Children's Abilities	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	1	(5.0)	0	(0.0)
Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	1	(5.0)	0	(0.0)
Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	1	(5.0)
Achievement Tests								
Wide Range Achievement Test	20	(100.0)	17	(85.0)	13	(65.0)	16	(80.0)
Durrell Analysis of Reading Difficulty	18	(90.0)	19	(95.0)	19	(95.0)	19	(95.0)
Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery	17	(85.0)	18	(90.0)	18	(90.0)	17	(85.0)
Peabody Individual Achievement Test	1	(5.0)	1	(5.0)	0	(0.0)	1	(5.0)
Brigance Diagnostic Inventory of Basic Skills	0	(0.0)	2	(10.0)	0	(0.0)	1	(5.0)

Table 14 (continued)

	LEP				Non-LEP			
	Initial Placement (n=20)		Reevaluation (n=20)		Initial Placement (n=20)		Reevaluation (n=20)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Language Dominance/Proficiency Tests								
Pictorial Test of Bilingualism and Language Dominance	19	(95.0)	3	(15.0)	13	(65.0)	3	(15.0)
Language Assessment Scales	14	(70.0)	16	(80.0)	12	(60.0)	13	(65.0)
Dos Amigos Verbal Language Scales	1	(5.0)	12	(60.0)	1	(5.0)	8	(40.0)
James Language Dominance Test	1	(5.0)	0	(0.0)	3	(15.0)	1	(5.0)
Woodcock-Johnson Language Proficiency Battery	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	1	(5.0)
Perceptual Motor Tests								
Bender Visual Motor Gestalt Test	12	(60.0)	12	(60.0)	14	(70.0)	15	(75.0)
Slosson Drawing Coordination Test for Children and Adults	1	(5.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Speech/Language Tests								
Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test	1	(5.0)	0	(0.0)	5	(25.0)	1	(5.0)
Sequenced Inventory of Communication Development	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	1	(5.0)	0	(0.0)
Projective Tests								
Rorschach	0	(0.0)	2	(10.0)	0	(0.0)	1	(5.0)
Sentence Completion	0	(0.0)	2	(10.0)	0	(0.0)	1	(5.0)
Thematic Apperception Test	0	(0.0)	2	(10.0)	0	(0.0)	1	(5.0)
Draw A Person	0	(0.0)	1	(5.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Family Constellation Drawing	0	(0.0)	1	(5.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)

Table 14 (continued)

	LEP				Non-LEP			
	Initial Placement (n=20)		Reevaluation (n=20)		Initial Placement (n=20)		Reevaluation (n=20)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Adaptive Behavior Tests								
Adaptive Behavior Inventory for Children	1	(5.0)	1	(5.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Vineland Social Maturity Scale	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	1	(5.0)	1	(5.0)
AAMD Adaptive Behavior Scale — Public School Version	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	1	(5.0)
Developmental/Readiness Tests								
None used in this district.								
Other Tests								
None used in this district.								

Table 15

Tests Administered to
Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Children at
Initial Placement and Reevaluation
(District 2)

	LEP				Non-LEP			
	Initial Placement (n = 16)		Reevaluation (n = 14)		Initial Placement (n = 16)		Reevaluation (n = 16)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Intelligence Tests								
Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised	16	(100.0)	14	(100.0)	14	(87.5)	15	(93.8)
Columbia Mental Maturity Scale	2	(12.5)	0	(0.0)	1	(6.3)	0	(0.0)
Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	2	(12.5)	0	(0.0)
Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	1	(6.3)
Hiskey-Nebraska Test of Learning Aptitude	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	1	(6.3)
Achievement Tests								
Woodcock Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery	9	(56.3)	14	(100.0)	9	(56.3)	16	(100.0)
Wide Range Achievement Test	6	(37.5)	0	(0.0)	6	(37.5)	1	(6.3)
Slosson Oral Reading Test	5	(31.3)	0	(0.0)	3	(18.8)	0	(0.0)
Gilmore Oral Reading Test	4	(25.0)	1	(7.1)	5	(31.3)	2	(12.5)
Test of Early Reading Ability	2	(12.5)	0	(0.0)	1	(6.3)	0	(0.0)
Key Math Diagnostic Arithmetic Test	1	(6.3)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Peabody Individual Achievement Test	0	(0.0)	1	(7.1)	2	(12.5)	0	(0.0)

Table 15 (continued)

	LEP				Non-LEP			
	Initial Placement (n = 16)		Reevaluation (n = 14)		Initial Placement (n = 16)		Reevaluation (n = 16)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Mann Suiter Developmental Paragraph Reading Inventory	0	(0.0)	5	(35.7)	1	(6.3)	4	(25.0)
Brignance Diagnostic Inventory of Basic Skills	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	1	(6.3)	0	(0.0)
Diagnostic Reading Test	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	1	(6.3)	0	(0.0)
Test of Written Spelling	0	(0.0)	1	(7.1)	0	(0.0)	6	(37.5)
Word Test	0	(0.0)	1	(7.1)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Test of Written Language	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	2	(12.5)
Test of Reading Comprehension	0	(0.0)	1	(7.1)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Language Dominance/ Proficiency Tests								
Bilingual Syntax Measure	6	(37.5)	2	(14.3)	5	(31.3)	0	(0.0)
Dos Amigos Verbal Language Scales	3	(18.8)	0	(0.0)	1	(6.3)	0	(0.0)
Primary Acquisition of Language	2	(12.5)	1	(7.1)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Pictorial Test of Bilingualism and Language Dominance	2	(12.5)	0	(0.0)	3	(18.8)	0	(0.0)
Perceptual Motor Tests								
Bender Visual Motor Gestalt Test	16	(100.0)	10	(71.4)	12	(75.0)	12	(75.0)
Beery Developmental Test of Visual Motor Integration	2	(12.5)	0	(0.0)	1	(6.3)	2	(12.5)
Horst Reversals Test	1	(6.3)	0	(0.0)	1	(6.3)	0	(0.0)
Audiogram	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	1	(6.3)	0	(0.0)
Keystone Telebinocular	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	1	(6.3)	0	(0.0)
Vision/Hearing Screening	0	(0.0)	1	(7.1)	0	(0.0)	1	(6.3)

Table 15 (continued)

	LEP				Non-LEP			
	Initial Placement (n = 16)		Reevaluation (n = 14)		Initial Placement (n = 16)		Reevaluation (n = 16)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Speech/Language Tests								
Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test	4	(25.0)	0	(0.0)	7	(43.8)	1	(6.3)
Test of Auditory Comprehension of Language	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	1	(6.3)	0	(0.0)
Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test	0	(0.0)	1	(7.1)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
The Token Test for Children	0	(0.0)	1	(7.1)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Projective Tests								
Human Figure Drawing	11	(68.8)	7	(50.0)	10	(62.5)	8	(50.0)
Draw a Person	2	(12.5)	6	(42.9)	1	(6.3)	10	(62.5)
Sentence Completion	2	(12.5)	9	(64.3)	3	(18.8)	10	(62.5)
Draw a Family	1	(6.3)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Children's Apperception Test	1	(6.3)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
School Behavior Checklist	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	1	(6.3)
Adaptive Behavior Tests								
Adaptive Behavior Inventory for Children	1	(6.3)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Vineland Social Maturity Scale	0	(0.0)	1	(7.1)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Developmental/ Readiness Tests								
School Readiness Survey	3	(18.8)	0	(0.0)	1	(6.3)	0	(0.0)
MOLES Language/Reading Program for Readiness Skills	1	(6.3)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Inventory of Early Development	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	1	(6.3)	0	(0.0)

Table 15 (continued)

	LEP				Non-LEP			
	Initial Placement (n = 16)		Reevaluation (n = 14)		Initial Placement (n = 16)		Reevaluation (n = 16)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Other Tests								
Tasks of Emotional Development	0	(0.0)	2	(14.3)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Health History Inventories	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	1	(6.3)

Table 16

Number of Different Test Instruments Used in Initial and Reevaluation Assessments of Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Students

Type of Test	District 1						District 2					
	LEP		Non-LEP		Full Sample		LEP		Non-LEP		Full Sample	
	I[a]	R[b]	I	R	I	R	I	R	I	R	I	R
IQ	4	2	5	3	6	4	2	1	3	3	3	3
Achievement	4	5	3	5	4	5	6	7	9	6	10	9
Language Dominance/ Proficiency	4	3	4	5	4	5	4	2	3	0	4	2
Perceptual/Motor	2	1	1	1	2	1	3	2	5	3	5	3
Speech/Language	1	0	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	3
Projective	0	5	0	3	0	5	5	3	3	4	5	4
Adaptive Behavior	1	1	1	2	2	3	1	1	0	0	1	1
Developmental/ Readiness	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	3	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
Total	16	17	16	20	20	24	24	19	27	18	33	27

Note. Numbers represent the number of different test instruments used by each district.

[a] I = Initial Assessment

[b] R = Reevaluation Assessment

Number of Tests Administered to Each Child. Information from assessment batteries was also used to calculate the average number of tests of each type and total number of tests administered to LEPs and non-LEPs during initial and reevaluation assessments. Average numbers of tests administered were generally similar across districts (see Table 17), with the most commonly administered types of tests being achievement, IQ and perceptual motor. The only area which varied across districts was language dominance/proficiency. District 1 appeared to use more tests of this type than did District 2. However, since District 1 did not provide the date of testing with language tests, it was not possible to determine whether these tests were part of initial and reevaluation test batteries or whether past results were reported again.

Across district means were compared using 2 X 2 repeated measures analyses of variance in which LEP status was treated as a between subjects factor and time of testing was treated as a within subjects factor (see Table 18). Combined means were used due to small sample sizes within districts. Results showed that while the total number of tests administered did not change across assessments, significantly fewer ($p \leq .05$) IQ tests and developmental screenings and significantly more projective and "other tests" were administered during reevaluations than during initial assessments. No significant differences in number of tests administered based on LEP status or significant interactions were found.

Results related to test batteries suggest that the composition of initial and reevaluation assessments differs in two main ways. First, a greater emphasis appears to be given to projective testing at reevaluation. The number of different projective instruments used by one district increased from none to 5 between assessments, and the mean number of projective tests administered to each child increased significantly for the full sample. Second, IQ appears to be tested less frequently in reevaluations than in initial assessments. The number of different IQ tests used to gauge children's intellectual functioning is more limited at reevaluation, and it is less likely that a child will receive a second IQ test, even from this more limited list. It appears that despite the numerous problems with using the WISC-R in the assessment of Hispanic children, it is the IQ test most often used in reevaluations.

Language Testing at Reevaluation

Although the number of language proficiency tests reported across districts did not differ for initial and reevaluation assessments, those tests that were administered were of particular interest. Since assessors were faced with deciding on a language of administration for reevaluation test instruments and ARD committees further needed to distinguish the influence of a child's English language proficiency from the influence of a handicapping condition when determining the handicapping condition, the language testing conducted to facilitate these decisions was examined.

Table 17

Mean Number of Nine Types of Tests Administered to Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient LD Students at Initial and Reevaluation Assessments by District

	District 1				District 2			
	LEP		Non-LEP		LEP		Non-LEP	
Type of Test	Initial	Reeval.	Initial	Reeval.	Initial	Reeval.	Initial	Reeval.
Achievement	2.9	2.9	2.6	2.8	1.6	1.9	1.6	1.9
IQ	1.5	1.1	1.3	1.1	1.3	1.1	1.1	1.0
Language Dominance/ Proficiency	1.6	1.6	1.4	1.3	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.0
Perceptual-Motor	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.8	1.1	0.9
Projective	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.2	0.6	1.8	0.5	1.8
Speech/Language	0.1	0.0	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
Adaptive behavior	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0
Developmental screening/readiness	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
Total number of tests	6.7	6.5	6.3	6.2	5.1	5.8	4.6	5.8

Note. Means represent the average number of tests per child.

Table 18

Mean Number of Nine Types of Tests Administerd to Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient LD Students at Initial and Reevaluation Assessments Across Both Districts

	LEP			Non-LEP		
Type of Test	Initial	Reeval.	n	Initial	Reeval.	n
Achievement	2.3	2.4	34	2.2	2.4	35
IQ	1.4	1.0	34	1.2	1.1	35
Language dominance/ Proficiency	1.1	1.0	34	1.0	0.7	35
Perceptual-Motor	0.7	0.7	34	0.9	0.8	35
Projective	0.2	0.9	34	0.2	0.9	35
Speech/Language	0.1	0.1	34	0.2	0.1	35
Adaptive behavior	0.1	0.1	34	0.1	0.1	35
Developmental screening/readiness	0.1	0.0	34	0.1	0.0	35
Other	0.0	0.1	34	0.0	0.1	35
Total number of tests	6.0	6.2	34	5.5	6.0	35

Note. Means represent the average number of tests per child.

District practices related to the reporting of test scores made the examination of current language data difficult. In District 1, dates of testing were not reported along with individual tests. Therefore, although results of language testing were included in reevaluation assessment reports for 90.0% of LEPs and 85.5% of non-LEPs, it was not possible to ascertain the recency of the information reported. In an attempt to separate older from more recent information, language tests included in initial assessments were examined, and only those tests which differed from those in the initial battery were tallied. Under these conditons, results of language tests were found for 65.0% of LEPs and 64.7% of non-LEPs. However, it was still not possible to ascertain whether this language testing was conducted concurrently with other parts of the assessment. Therefore, these percentages may either overestimate the amount of language testing done because past testing is being reported, or underestimate the amount of language testing done because tests which were given at initial assessment were readministered as part of the reevaluation.

Scores reported from District 1's language proficiency tests were, however, fairly complete. An English score, Spanish score, and language dominance rating were included for 76.9% of LEPs and 81.8% of non-LEPs for whom potentially current language testing was available.

Reevaluations for District 2 did include dates of testing. Rates of language testing were found to be much lower in this district than in District 1. Only 14.3% of LEPs had current language proficiency scores, and no current scores were reported for non-LEPs. Results reported by this district were also more limited than those for District 1. Scores reported for LEPs included an English score for one child and English and Spanish scores for the second.

Overall, the amount of language testing undertaken at reevaluation appears to be strongly influenced by district practice, as do conventions for reporting results. The current information available to both districts' reevaluation assessors and ARD committees concerning children's language proficiency appears to be limited at best.

Language of Test Administration

Data concerning the language of IQ and achievement test administration at reevaluation were collected from assessment reports. In cases where a language of administration was not specified along with the discussion of test results, it was inferred from any general description of procedures in the assessment report which specified the language used in testing.

Language of WISC-R Administration. Both reporting procedures related to language of WISC-R administration and the language of administration itself appear to be strongly influenced by district practice (see Table 19). Data were missing for the majority of subjects (both LEP and non-LEP) from District 1, while data were missing for only one subject from District 2. This large amount of missing data for one district makes results difficult to interpret, and also suggests that the two districts maintain different reporting practices.

Table 19

Language of Administration at Reevaluation for the
Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised (WISC-R)
for Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Students

	District 1				District 2				Total			
	LEP		Non-LEP		LEP		Non-LEP		LEP		Non-LEP	
Language	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
English	4	(20.0)	2	(10.5)	4	(44.4)	10	(90.9)	8	(27.6)	12	(40.0)
Spanish	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Both Languages	5	(25.0)	5	(26.3)	5	(55.6)	0	(0.0)	10	(34.5)	5	(16.7)
No Information	11	(55.0)	12	(63.2)	0	(0.0)	1	(9.1)	11	(37.9)	13	(43.3)
Total	20	(100.0)	19	(100.0)	9	(100.0)	11	(100.0)	29	(100.0)	30	(100.0)

Actual language of administration also varied across districts. While neither district reported results of a full Spanish WISC-R administration, District 2 was more likely than District 1 to test its LEP students in both languages. Additionally, District 2 conducted testing in both languages only with LEP students, while District 1 tested about one quarter of both its LEP and its non-LEP students bilingually.

The "both languages" testing category is a problematic one, in that neither district provided a full description of what procedures and norms were used to obtain WISC-R results. It seems likely, however, that the use of both languages resulted in a non-standardized administration of the test. Despite this, norm-referenced scores were reported for bilingual administrations.

Language of Woodcock-Johnson Administration. Results for the Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery, an achievement test, are similar to those for the WISC-R (see Table 20). The number of children for whom the language of administration is reported is higher for District 2 than for District 1, and only a few Spanish administrations are reported in either district. District 2 conducted the majority of its bilingual testing with LEP students, while District 1 tested children from both groups bilingually.

Comparison of Initial to Reevaluation Language of Administration. Comparison of language of administration for initial and reevaluation assessments was limited to IQ tests for students from District 2 only. No initial data had been reported for District 1, and no District 2 students had both an initial and a reevaluation language of administration for the Woodcock-Johnson.

Data for both WISC-R administrations were available for only 7 students. Results for this limited sample suggest a greater use of English testing at reevaluation. Those students who were initially tested in English were retested in English, and those students who were tested in Spanish or bilingually were tested bilingually.

Changes in Test Scores and Language Data

Test score and other data were analyzed to answer the following research questions:

1. How do LEP and non-LEP students score on the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised (WISC-R) upon reevaluation? How do these scores compare to scores from initial assessments?

2. How do LEP and non-LEP students score on the Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery upon reevaluation? How do these scores compare to scores from initial assessments?

3. How do LEP and non-LEP students score on the Bender Visual Motor Gestalt Test upon reevaluation? How do these scores compare to scores from initial assessments?

Table 20

Language of Administration at Reevaluation for the
Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery
for Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Students

	District 1				District 2				Total			
	LEP		Non-LEP		LEP		Non-LEP		LEP		Non-LEP	
Language	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
English	5	(27.8)	3	(15.8)	8	(61.5)	14	(87.5)	13	(41.9)	17	(48.6)
Spanish	0	(0.0)	1	(5.3)	1	(7.7)	0	(0.0)	1	(3.2)	1	(2.9)
Both Languages	1	(5.6)	2	(10.5)	4	(30.8)	1	(6.3)	5	(16.1)	3	(8.6)
No Information	12	(66.7)	13	(68.4)	0	(0.0)	1	(6.3)	12	(37.8)	14	(40.0)
Total	18	(100.0)	19	(100.0)	13	(100.0)	16	(100.0)	31	(100.0)	35	(100.0)

4. What do teachers perceive to be LEP and non-LEP students' dominant language at the time of reevaluation? How does this compare to the dominant language at school at the time of initial placement?

Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised (WISC-R)

Two by two repeated measures analyses of variance were used to examine changes in children's WISC-R scores. LEP status (LEP or non-LEP) was treated as a between subjects factor; time of testing (initial assessment or reevaluation) was treated as a within subjects factor.

Results revealed a number of significant ($p \leq .05$) differences between initial and reevaluation scores (see Table 21). Both the Verbal and Full Scale IQ mean scores were significantly lower at reevaluation than at initial assessment. Scores at reevaluation were also significantly lower for the Similarities, Vocabulary and Comprehension subtests from the Verbal Scale, and for the Object Assembly Subtest from the Performance Scale. Scores were significantly higher on the Picture Arrangement Subtest of the Performance Scale at reevaluation.

No significant differences were found for the LEP status factor, and no significant interactions were found. Scores for LEP and non-LEP children did not change in different ways between initial and reevaluation assessments.

Both the IQ and subscale scores of the WISC-R are designed to be consistent across age groups, i.e., the score that represents the "average" IQ is always 100 and the "average" score for each subscale is always 10 regardless of the age of the child tested. Therefore, the results obtained here suggest that the verbal skills of this group of Hispanic children fell further behind those of their age peers between their initial and reevaluation assessments.

Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery

Two by two repeated measures analyses of variance which were identical to those used in WISC-R analyses were used to examine reading, math and written language grade standard scores from English administrations of the Woodcock-Johnson (see Table 22). No significant differences or interactions were obtained. Since standard scores on the Woodcock compare children to their grade level peers, this finding suggests that students had the same level of achievement in relation to grade peers at initial placement and reevaluation. However, results may have been influenced by the small number of children for whom scores for both assessments were available.

Bender Visual Motor Gestalt Test

A 2 X 2 repeated measures analysis of variance like those described previously was used to examine the Koppitz error score from the Bender Visual Motor Gestalt Test. Results showed that the number of errors decreased significantly between initial assessment and reevaluation (see Table 23). No significant difference based on LEP status or significant

Table 21

Mean WISC-R Scores for
Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Students at
Initial Assessment and Reevaluation

	LEP			Non-LEP		
Scores	Initial	Reeval.	n	Initial	Reeval.	n
IQ						
Full Scale IQ[a]	84.1	80.8	29	86.3	84.8	29
Verbal IQ[a]	80.0	74.8	28	82.9	79.3	28
Performance IQ	92.1	90.7	28	90.3	90.9	29
Verbal Subtests						
Information	4.2	4.1	24	4.7	5.3	24
Similarities[a]	8.5	6.4	25	8.2	7.0	27
Arithmetic	7.1	6.6	25	6.9	7.2	27
Vocabulary[a]	6.9	5.4	25	7.3	6.4	27
Comprehension[a]	8.3	6.8	24	8.3	7.6	24
Performance Subtests						
Picture Completion	9.3	9.1	24	9.2	9.4	25
Picture Arrangement[b]	7.6	8.8	25	8.2	9.6	27
Block Design	8.6	8.5	25	8.4	7.5	27
Object Assembly[a]	10.0	9.0	24	10.0	9.0	25
Coding	9.3	7.8	24	7.4	7.5	25

[a]Mean scores for this scale or subtest were significantly lower at reevaluation than at initial assessment.

[b]Mean scores for this subtest were significantly higher at reevaluation than at initial assessment.

Table 22

Mean Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery Scores for Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Students at Initial Assessment and Reevaluation

	LEP			Non-LEP		
	Initial	Reevaluation	n	Initial	Reevaluation	n
Reading standard score	75.6	72.8	6	72.2	74.4	15
Math standard score	81.4	81.1	15	77.2	78.0	20
Written language standard score	73.0	67.8	12	73.3	75.8	10

Table 23

Mean Koppitz Error Scores on the Bender Visual Motor Gestalt Test for Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Students at Initial and Reevaluation Assessment

	Initial Score	Reevaluation Score	n
LEP	6.9	2.8	12
Non-LEP	7.1	4.1	17

interaction which would suggest that scores for LEPs and non-LEPs changed in different ways between evaluations was found.

Since the Koppitz error score reflects the raw number of errors made by a child, the significant decrease observed does indicate that children's performance improved between evaluations. However, it does not necessarily mean that their performance improved in relation to that of their age/grade peers. Children are expected to make fewer errors on the Bender as they get older.

Dominant Language at School

Ratings of children's dominant language at school were collected from reevaluation assessment reports. Data were not reported for the majority (59.7%) of the sample. These missing data represented 55.6% of LEPs and 63.9% of non-LEPs. This is a much higher rate of missing data than was found for language dominance at school at the time of initial placement. At that time, data were missing for 15.3% of the full sample (8.3% of LEPs and 22.2% of non-LEPs). School language dominance data are collected much less frequently at reevaluation than at initial placement.

The majority of both LEP and non-LEP students for whom data were available were perceived as English dominant in school at the time of reevaluation (see Table 24). Only 25% of LEPs and 8% of non-LEPs were thought to be Spanish dominant.

School language dominance at initial placement and at reevaluation were compared using a conjoint frequency table (see Table 25). Results showed that perceptions of the language dominance of LEPs were more likely to change between evaluations than were perceptions of the language dominance of non-LEPs. Fifty-eight percent of LEPs changed language dominance categories, while only 37% of non-LEPs changed categories.

Among children whose school language dominance was perceived to have changed between evaluations, 90% of LEPs and 100% of non-LEPs changed in a way that indicated greater English usage. These children were perceived to have moved from Spanish to English dominance, from Spanish dominance to dominance in both languages or from dominance in both languages to English dominance. Only one child, a LEP, moved in the direction of greater Spanish use. This child was perceived to be bilingual dominant at initial placement, but Spanish dominant at reevaluation.

Given that only 3 years elapsed between evaluations, it is somewhat surprising that nearly all children would have become English or bilingual dominant. Cummins (1984) suggests that children require at least five years of exposure to English in a school setting before both academic and communicative competence are achieved. It seems possible that teachers and other raters of language dominance for the present sample were influenced mainly by childrens' communicative competence, to

Table 24

Language Dominance at School of
Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Students
at Reevaluation

	LEP		Non-LEP	
Dominant Language	#	%	#	%
English	10	(62.5)	11	(84.6)
Spanish	4	(25.0)	1	(7.7)
Both	2	(12.5)	1	(7.7)
Total	16	(100.0)	13	(100.0)

Table 25

Dominant Language at School for
Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Students
at Both Assessments

Initial Dominant Language	Reevaluation Dominant Language	LEP (n=16) #	LEP (n=16) %	Non-LEP (n=11) #	Non-LEP (n=11) %
English	English	4	(25.0)	6	(54.5)
English	Spanish	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
English	Both	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Spanish	English	5	(31.2)	1	(9.1)
Spanish	Spanish	3	(18.8)	1	(9.1)
Spanish	Both	2	(12.5)	0	(0.0)
Both	English	1	(6.3)	3	(27.3)
Both	Spanish	1	(6.3)	0	(0.0)
Both	Both	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Total		16	(100.0)	11	(100.0)

the exclusion of academic language proficiency. However, it is not possible to draw this conclusion with complete certainty without having more information about students' initial English proficiency than was provided in these ratings of language dominance at school.

Placement Procedures Following Reevaluation

Analysis of data about placement procedures was carried out to answer the following questions:

1. How many persons compose reevaluation ARD committees? How does the size of reevaluation ARD committees compare to the size of initial ARD committees?

2. What percentage of agreement occurs concerning reevaluation placements? How does the percentage of agreement compare at initial placement and at reevaluation for LEPs and non-LEPs?

Number of Persons on ARD Committees

The number of persons on each student's ARD committee was determined by counting the number of signatures which appeared on the ARD form. An ARD participant was counted only once even if he/she represented more than one position.

The average number of persons at initial ARDs for both LEPs and non-LEPs was approximately 6; the average number of persons present at reevaluation ARDs for both groups was approximately 5 (see Table 26). A 2 X 2 repeated measures analysis of variance which used LEP status as a between subjects factor and time of meeting (initial or reevaluation) as a within subjects factor revealed that for both groups, the number of persons at the reevaluation ARD was significantly lower than the number of persons at the initial ARD. No significant LEP status difference or interaction was found.

Table 26

Mean Number of Persons Present at Initial and Reevaluation Admission Review and Dismissal Committee Meetings for Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Students

	Initial ARD	Reevaluation ARD	n
LEP	6.1	5.2	35
Non-LEP	6.2	4.7	34

Percentage of Agreement

Whether or not individual committee members agreed with ARD committees' initial and reevaluation placement decisions was determined by examining records of ARD meetings. The number of members who disagreed with the committee decision and the reason for disagreement were recorded in cases where disagreement occurred.

No instances of disagreement were found for initial placements, resulting in a 100.0% rate of agreement for LEPs and non-LEPs. The rate of agreement for reevaluation placement was also 100.0% for LEPs indicating that, for this sample, no disagreement was found for any LEP child at either ARD meeting. The rate of agreement at reevaluation for non-LEPs was 93.9%. Two cases were found in which one committee member dissented. In the first, which occurred in District 1, the assessment representative agreed with the child's handicapping condition, but felt that the child should spend more time in special education than was recommended by the committee. In the second, which occurred in District 2, the classroom teacher felt that the child should not be dismissed from special education due to emotional problems.

Overall, data suggest that ARD committees are in agreement about the initial and reevaluation placements of Hispanic children. The child's handicapping condition was questioned in only one case, and the percentage of agreement for the full sample across both meetings was 98.6%.

Changes in Placement

The following research questions concerning placement were examined:

1. What handicaps are assigned to LEP and non-LEP students following reevaluation? How do these handicaps compare to those assigned at initial placement?

2. How much time in special education is recommended for LEP and non-LEP students following reevaluation? How does this compare to the amount of time which was recommended at initial placement?

Handicaps Assigned at Reevaluation

The majority of students (65%) were assigned the same primary and secondary handicaps at reevaluation as had been assigned at initial placement. Thirty-seven percent of LEPs, and 49% of non-LEPs, were found to be LD at both initial placement and reevaluation; 29% of the LEPs and 15% of non-LEPs were found to be both LD and speech and language handicapped (SLH) at both times (see Table 27). In sum, 66% of the LEPs and 64% of non-LEPs maintained the same handicapping condition(s).

Rates of dismissal differed only slightly for the two groups. Eleven percent of LEPs and 18% of non-LEPs were dismissed at reevaluation.

Table 27

Handicaps of
Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Students at
Initial Placement and at Reevaluation

Initial Handicap	Reevaluation Handicap							
	LD	LD/SLH	SLH	ED	ED/LD	OHI/SLH	Dismissed	Total
	LEP							
	(n=35)							
LD								
#	13	2	1	1	1	0	4	22
%	(37.1)	(5.7)	(2.9)	(2.9)	(2.9)	(0.0)	(11.4)	(62.9)
LD/SLH								
#	1	10	1	0	0	1	0	13
%	(2.9)	(28.6)	(2.9)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(2.9)	(0.0)	(37.1)
Column Total								
#	14	12	2	1	1	1	4	35
%	(40.0)	(34.3)	(5.7)	(2.9)	(2.9)	(2.9)	(11.4)	(100.0)

Note. Percentages are based on all LEPs

	Non-LEP							
	(n=33)							
LD								
#	16	2	0	0	0	0	5	23
%	(48.5)	(6.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(15.2)	(69.7)
LD/SLH								
#	4	5	0	0	0	0	1	10
%	(12.1)	(15.2)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(3.0)	(30.3)
Column Total								
#	20	7	0	0	0	0	6	33
%	(60.6)	(21.2)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(18.2)	(100.0)

Note. Percentages are based on all Non-LEPs.

However, data for those children who remained in special education but whose handicap(s) did not remain the same suggest LEP/non-LEP differences. No non-LEP child received a primary handicap other than LD, while LEPs were assigned primary handicaps of SLH (5.7%), emotional disturbance (5.7%) and other health impairment (2.9%). Overall, 14.3% of LEPs received a different primary handicap upon reevaluation, while no non-LEP child did. This pattern of change in primary handicapping condition for LEPs only is common to both districts (see Table 28). This finding suggests that ARD committees may experience more difficulty in assigning an appropriate primary handicap when a child is LEP.

Additionally, when the amount of involvement in special education for children who do not maintain the same handicapping condition is considered, LEPs are more likely than non-LEPs to become more involved (see Table 29). Using the severity of the handicapping label as an indicator of special education involvement reveals that 41.7% of LEPs who did not receive the same handicap(s) at reevaluation became more involved in special education, while only 16.7% of non-LEPs became more involved.

Time in Special Education

A 2 X 2 repeated measures analysis of variance (LEP/non-LEP; initial time/time at reevaluation) was used to examine changes in time in special education for all non-dismissed students. Results revealed that, regardless of the LEP status of the student, ARD committees recommended significantly more time in special education at reevaluation (see Table 30).

Since this overall analysis combined two initial handicapping conditions (LD and LD-SLH), a series of *t* tests was conducted to determine whether initial handicap was related to the change in time in special education at reevaluation (see Table 31). Results showed that time in special education increased significantly for LEPs initially labeled LD, but did not increase significantly for LD-SLH LEPs or LD and LD-SLH non-LEPs. Learning disabled LEPs were also the group which received the lowest average initial amount of time in special education.

A second series of t-tests was used to examine the relationship between the handicap assigned at reevaluation and change in time in special education (see Table 32). It was hypothesized that some reevaluation handicaps would result in greater increases in time in special education than others. Due to the small number of subjects assigned to some handicaps at reevaluation, it was not possible to fully test this hypothesis. Changes in time in special education were significant for LEPs whose reevaluation handicaps were LD or LD/SLH. Changes were not significant for non-LEPs for either of these handicapping conditions.

Finally, time in special education at initial placement was compared for dismissed and non-dismissed students (see Table 33). The difference in initial time was significant for non-LEP students. Non-LEPs who were dismissed at reevaluation were initially in special education for significantly less time than non-dismissed students. No significant difference was found for LEPs.

Table 28

Handicaps of
Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Students at
Initial Placement and at Reevaluation by District

Initial Handicap	Reevaluation Handicap							
	LD	LD/SLH	SLH	ED	ED/LD	OHI/SLH	Dismissed	Total
District 1 LEP								
LD								
#	10	2	0	0	1	0	3	16)
(%)[a]	(50.0)	(10.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(5.0)	(0.0)	(15.0)	(80.0)
LD/SLH								
#	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	4
(%)[a]	(5.0)	(15.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(20.0)
TOTAL								
#	11	5	0	0	1	0	3	20
(%)[a]	(55.0)	(25.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(5.0)	(0.0)	(15.0)	(100.0)
District 1 Non-LEP								
LD								
#	12	2	0	0	0	0	4	18
(%)[b]	(60.0)	(10.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(20.0)	(90.0)
LD/SLH								
#	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
(%)[b]	(0.0)	(10.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(10.0)
TOTAL								
#	12	4	0	0	0	0	4	20
(%)[b]	(60.0)	(20.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(20.0)	(100.0)
District 2 LEP								
LD								
#	3	0	1	1	0	0	1	6
(%)[c]	(20.0)	(0.0)	(6.7)	(6.7)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(6.7)	(40.0)
LD/SLH								
#	0	7	1	0	0	1	0	9
(%)[c]	(0.0)	(46.6)	(6.7)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(6.7)	(0.0)	(60.0)
TOTAL								
#	3	7	2	1	0	1	1	15
(%)[c]	(20.0)	(46.6)	(13.3)	(6.7)	(0.0)	(6.7)	(6.7)	(100.0)
District 2 Non-LEP								
LD								
#	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	5
(%)[d]	(30.8)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(7.7)	(38.5)
LD/SLH								
#	4	3	0	0	0	0	1	8
(%)[d]	(30.8)	(23.1)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(7.7)	(61.5)
TOTAL								
#	8	3	0	0	0	0	2	13
(%)[d]	(61.5)	(23.1)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(15.4)	(100.0)

[a]Percentages are based on all District 1 LEPs (n=20).
[b]Percentages are based on all District 1 Non-LEPs (n=20).
[c]Percentages are based on all District 2 LEPs (n=15).
[d]Percentages are based on all District 2 Non-LEPs (n=13).

Table 29

Changes in Special Education Involvement at Reevaluation for Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient LD Students

LEPs (n = 12)

Initial Handicap	Reevaluation Handicap	Greater or Lesser Involvement	Number of Children	%
LD	LD/SLH	G	2	16.7
LD	ED	G	1	8.3
LD	ED/LD	G	1	8.3
LD SLH	OHI/SLH	G	1	8.3
			Subtotal % Greater	41.7
LD	SLH	L	1	8.3
LD	Dismissed	L	4	33.3
LD/SLH	LD	L	1	8.3
LD/SLH	SLH	L	1	8.3
			Subtotal % Lesser	58.3

Non-LEPs (n = 12)

Initial Handicap	Reevaluation Handicap	Greater or Lesser Involvement	Number of Children	%
LD	LD/SLH	G	2	16.7
			Subtotal % Greater	16.7
LD	Dismissed	L	5	41.7
LD/SLH	LD	L	4	33.3
LD/SLH	Dismissed	L	1	8.3
			Subtotal % Lesser	83.3

Table 30

Mean Amount of Time in Special Education
Assigned at Initial Placement and at Reevaluation for
Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Students
(in minutes per week)

	Initial	Reevaluation	n
LEP	493.2	765.3	26
Non-LEP	603.1	775.4	24

Note. Students who were dismissed are not included in this table.

Table 31

T-test Results for
Comparisons of Time in Special Education in Minutes per Week for
Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Students by
Initial Handicapping Condition

Initial Handicap	Time in Special Education			
	Initial time	At reevaluation	t	n
	Limited English proficient students			
LD	389.1	651.6	-3.74*	16
LD/SLH	660.0	947.5	-1.64	10
	Non-limited English proficient students			
LD	510.9	591.3	-0.76	16
LD/SLH	757.5	1143.8	-2.16	8

* $p < .01$

Table 32

T-test Results for
Comparisons of Time in Special Education in Minutes Per Week for
Limited English Proficient and Non-Limited English Proficient Students by
Reevaluation Handicapping Conditions

Reevaluation Handicap	Time in Special Education: Initial time	At reevaluation	t	n
		Limited English proficient students		
LD	385.7	583.9	-2.98*	14
LD/SLH	575.0	986.1	-2.33**	9
SLH	Data not available			
ED	300.0	750.0	-	1
ED/SLH	600.0	1200.0	-	1
OHI/SLH	1350.0	900.0	-	1
Dismissed	412.5	0.0	-	4
		Non-limited English proficient students		
LD	504.2	633.9	-1.18	18
LD/SLH	900.0	1200.0	-1.83	6
Dismissed	400.0	0.0	-	6

Note. T-tests were calculated only if data for 5 or more subjects were available.

* $p \leq .01$

** $p \leq .05$

Table 33

T-test Results for Initial Time in Special Education for Dismissed and Non-Dismissed Students

	Initial Time Non-Dismissed	n Non-Dismissed	Initial Time Dismissed	n Dismissed	t
LEPs	522.3	28	412.5	4	1.13
Non-LEPs	597.0	25	400.0	6	2.12*

Note. Time is reported in minutes per week.

* $p \leq .05$

Overall, time in special education appeared to be more variable for LEPs than for non-LEPs. While overall results did not suggest LEP/non-LEP differences, changes in time within handicapping conditions were more frequently significant for LEPs.

District Policy Analyses

Policies concerning reevaluation were analyzed to aid in the interpretation of findings. Federal and state policies and guidelines for special education were obtained from the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (P.L. 94-142) and from the State Department's Policies and Administrative Procedures for the Education of Handicapped Students (Texas Education Agency, 1980); district procedures manuals were used to obtain local policies.

Two major questions guided policy analyses:

1. What steps and personnel are involved in reevaluations and the three year review?

2. Are any provisions for consideration of children's linguistic and cultural backgrounds incorporated into district policies?

Steps in Reevaluation

A reevaluation and three-year review is a part of a series of regularly scheduled reviews of the educational plan of any handicapped student. Both districts' procedures manuals included guidelines for annual reviews by the ARD committee in which the appropriateness of: (a) the student's IEP goals and objectives, (b) the student's educational placement, and (c) any related services which the student received is considered. Annual reviews also examine the need for additional assessment and for any change in placement, including dismissal from special education. The annual review results in an updated IEP, and may result in a change in placement if it is determined that the student needs a different placement, that the student no longer needs special education services, or that the student no longer qualifies for services. No more specific criteria for placement change or dismissal are provided.

Both districts' procedures manuals directly quoted state policy concerning reevaluation. State policy mandates that:

(1) a review in which the ARD committee bases its decisions on new individual assessment information must occur at least once every three years;
(2) the three year interval shall be based on the anniversary date of the student's initial placement in special education;
(3) the professionals responsible for assessing each area of functioning and determining the handicapping condition shall determine and document the degree to which new assessment is necessary; and
(4) the ARD committee may request additional information for any area.

Neither district directly named the personnel to be involved in the reevaluation and review process. However, policy concerning the membership of the ARD committee suggested that at a minimum the three-year review must include representatives of administration, instruction, and assessment, an educational liaison, the student's parent, guardian or representative, and the student if appropriate.

Provisions for LEP Students

No specific reference to how the review process should be carried out for children who are not native speakers of English was made by either district's policy manual. Federal policy regarding the reevaluation does state that testing must be carried out in the primary language, by trained personnel using tests which are valid for the purpose for which they are used. However, no guidelines as to how these tests shall be selected or how the assessment procedure shall be implemented are provided in policy at any level.

V

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY, PRACTICE, AND RESEARCH

This study of reevaluation procedures suggests that the placement of language minority students in programs for the learning disabled may be an artifact of the lack of consideration of language status in the identification, assessment, and placement process. It is understandable if educators involved on review committees are frustrated that the majority of students are recommended for continued special education placement due to evidence of poor academic progress, even after three years of specialized instruction. However, of far greater significance are the negative effects on students who are placed in programs that are apparently not appropriate to their educational needs.

Improving special education services for language minority students will require formulation of policies and procedures, specific to this population, which can guide practice. The following sections suggest policy and recommend practices which can help accomplish the goal of providing all handicapped children appropriate services and helping them achieve their maximum potential.

Assessment Policy

Both federal and state policy require that tests and evaluations for determining special education eligibility be conducted in the student's primary language unless it is clearly not feasible to do so. Assessment of language competencies is to be one of the first steps in the comprehensive individual assessment so that the results can be used to determine the language(s) of assessment, the tests to be administered, how the results will be interpreted, and, finally, the recommendation for placement. There is a lack of policy specific to the implementation of this mandate for initial assessments and mandatory triannual evaluations. This is somewhat understandable in that, for the most part, tests of dominance and proficiency are considered to be primarily for the purpose of determining eligibility for special language programs (i.e., bilingual education or English as a second language). Eligibility for these programs is based on evidence that a child cannot profit from instruction delivered in English, even though native language skills may be assessed to determine the nature of bilingual instruction to be provided. For the purposes of determining special education eligibility, however, dominance and proficiency assessments in both languages will assure that the child is tested in his/her stronger language and that problems noted are not the result of limited English proficiency.

Comprehensive Language Assessment

According to Cummins (1982), most language assessment instruments used to measure language dominance or proficiency reflect the misconception that proficiency can be judged on the basis of students' mastery of the surface structures of language (i.e., phonology, syntax, grammar, etc.). Many students, however, experience academic failure

because, while they have good conversational skills, they lack cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), the literacy-related aspects of language. For these students, learning problems resulting from limited English proficiency may erroneously be attributed to a learning disability.

Placement of language minority students in programs for the learning disabled should not be allowed when the only measure of language proficiency is that provided by the language proficiency assessment used for placement of students in special language programs or by informal ratings of teachers or others regarding proficiency. State-approved language dominance and proficiency tests, because they are, for the most part, measures of the accuracy of surface structures, do not provide adequate data to determine whether the student can handle the more abstract, context-reduced language of instructional tasks (i.e., CALP). Instead, language minority students referred to special education should also include language assessment based on natural communication samples, and measures which tap cognitive academic language proficiency and pragmatic skills. Moreover, language data should be less than six months old to assure they reflect current language status.

Evaluation of Other Abilities

The strong language in P.L. 94-142 relative to assessment in the native language, and the manifest importance of native language evaluation to appropriate placement and evaluation, make it clear that school districts have specific responsibility to establish lack of feasibility in providing native language testing (Roos, nd). State departments of education should establish criteria to determine when it is "clearly not feasible" to test in the native language. Local education agencies should, at a minimum, be required to document good faith efforts to find appropriate appraisal personnel. Such documentation could include, for example, attempts to contract the services of bilingual examiners or affirmative action plans to recruit and hire bilingual assessors to assure that language minority students have access to nonbiased assessments. Special education policies should require written justification for English only assessments.

Documentation of Adaptation of Testing Procedures

Practices used to assess intelligence and achievement of language minority students, including adaptations of standardized procedures, should be clearly documented in psychoeducational reports. Scores should never be reported as valid indicators of a child's functioning level if test administration or scoring procedures violated the original standardization. Norms used in interpreting student performance were developed under an established set of conditions; to change these conditions will change the scores to an unknown extent. All psychoeducational reports should describe adaptations of accepted procedures and state that caution must be exercised in the interpretation of results. Otherwise, school personnel and parents may grossly misinterpret scores because they are not properly explained by the examiner.

Eligibility Criteria

State education agencies should develop eligibility criteria which are specific to language minority students. These criteria are critical to compliance with the mandate for certification that a child's problems are not the result of differences of language, culture, socioeconomic status, or to not having had opportunity to learn.

Evidence of a learning disability in the native language

A learning disability is a problem which occurs because of some type of abnormal cognitive process or deficit. If the learning disability occurs in one language, it should occur in the other language as well. Therefore, limited English proficient students should not be labeled learning disabled unless evidence is presented that the handicapping condition exists in the primary language and not only in English.

Limited English Proficient Students. When a LEP student is referred to special eduction, assessment of native language performance is of greater importance than is information about English language functioning because the handicapping condition must be documented in the native language. To be eligible for services under the classification of learning disabilities, a significant discrepancy between intelligence and Spanish language achievement must be shown. Otherwise, it is not possible to determine whether achievement difficulties are the result of limited English proficiency or whether they can be attributed to a handicapping condition.

English Proficient Students. It appears that the issue of native language assessment was considered moot for non-LEP Hispanic students. Since the child was judged English proficient, eligibility decisions were based on results of tests conducted in English. Assessment of relative language proficiency, though, is as important for non-LEPs as it is for LEP students. Although a child may be English proficient, the level of development of native language skills must still be ascertained in order to determine the child's stronger language. The discrepancy which qualifies the child as LD must be shown to be between the child's intelligence and achievement results on tests administered in the language of greatest strength. As an example, the referral may be of a non-LEP student who had previously been classified as LEP, taught basic skills in the native language, and was then transitioned into an English language program. Under these circumstances, the comprehensive assessment may indeed document a discrepancy between intelligence and English language achievement, but a critical question is whether a similar discrepancy exists between IQ and Spanish achievement, since basic skills were first taught in that language.

Other non-LEP children will be English proficient, and in some cases English monolingual, when they begin their school experience and will not be eligible for bilingual education programs. Again, while they may be proficient in interpersonal communication skills in English, they will experience achievement difficulties if they have not developed cognitive academic language proficiency (Cummins, 1982). These students are likely

candidates for special education unless they are provided intervention programs in the mainstream aimed at developing language skills commensurate with their Anglo peers. Their limited English proficiency could easily be interpreted as a learning disability without appropriate language data.

Training

That a handicapping condition must exist in both the native and the second language has implications regarding the qualifications of appraisal personnel. Besides being certified as educational diagnosticians or as school psychologists, and being thoroughly trained in the use of the tests they administer, appraisal personnel who test language minority students should be bilingual. That so few such personnel are available highlights a manpower need which must be addressed by institutions of higher education.

If they do not have available bilingual appraisal personnel, school districts must show evidence that their assessors have been trained in areas specific to the evaluation of language minority students before they can assess these students. State departments of education should develop minimum requirements for such training.

Admission, Review, and Dismissal Committees

It is critical that ARD committees include members who are knowledgeable about linguistic issues and who are able to interpret assessment data, discuss eligibility and placement alternatives, and make recommendations that would be the most appropriate for a LEP student who is also learning disabled. At least one member of the placement committee should be proficient in the child's native language and possess expertise about the influence of linguistic differences on school performance. This is not an express requirement of federal or state law at this time.

The ARD committee should include representatives from all programs in which the child is being served. Furthermore, the position or roles of all participants should be clearly specified on required reporting forms. Representation across programs will help assure that services are coordinated and that goals and objectives addressed by respective programs are consistent with both the handicapping condition and other unique needs.

Educational Programming

Two findings suggest a critical need for research in the area of intervention: the decline of full-scale and verbal-scale IQs despite increased levels of English proficiency and the lack of progress in the achievement domain, even after three years of special education services. While this study did not include investigation of actual services provided through special education, there is evidence to suggest that children's LEP status has little influence on the development of

individualized educational plans. Wilkinson, Willig, & Ortiz (1986), upon examination of the IEPs of 396 subjects drawn from the same sample as those in this study, found that native language instruction was recommended for only 2% of students.

Special education services, even if they include individualized instruction and specialized approaches and materials, appear to be futile without accomodation of the child's language status. It is unlikely that handicapped LEP students will profit from instruction in their weaker language. If native language instruction is not feasible because of limited availability of bilingual special educators, special education intervention for LEP students must, at a minimum, incorporate English as a second language instruction, and children must be given an opportunity to develop adequate English language proficiency, before improvement of achievement can be expected.

There is also a need to investigate the effectiveness of mainstream instruction in order to understand why students achieve poorly, even when instructed in their native language. Research is needed to determine whether low performance results from such variables as: (a) teachers' lowered expectations for handicapped students; (b) a premature shift to English language because of the child's handicapping condition; and/or (c) failure of bilingual educators to adapt native language instruction to accomodate the child's handicapping condition. It may be necessary to focus upon teacher training to assure that students profit from mainstream and special education services.

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REFERENCE NOTES

1. School district policy manuals are not referenced to maintain anonymity and confidentiality.

2. Source tables for analyses of variance are available upon request.